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# IMMORTALITY

AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY

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"POETRY, COMEDY, AND DUTY," ETC.

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## PREFATORY NOTE

WITH rare exceptions, magazine articles pass soon after their publication into a forgetfulness from which even Poole's Index is no sufficient deliverer. Yet old questions remain unanswered, and in forgotten discussions often lie precious intimations of truth. Although never a prolific writer for current reviews, Dr. Everett contributed, especially to the regular publications of his own religious communion, articles which have seemed worthy of preservation in collected form, not only because of their intrinsic merit,—all of Dr. Everett's thinking was so permeated with what he was accustomed to call the ideas of the reason that whatever he wrote has elements of universal and eternal value,—but also as trustworthy indications of the spirit and tendency of religious thought in America during the last half of the nine-

teenth century. Unrevised and unedited, these essays, written to serve his generation by one whose thought and life were deeply of the Eternal, are here reprinted for the Truth they contain, the Goodness they inspire, the Beauty they reveal.

W. W. FENN.

CAMBRIDGE, November 7, 1902.

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# IMMORTALITY



# IMMORTALITY

## *AND OTHER ESSAYS*

### IMMORTALITY

WE stand upon the earth, and see that the same destiny has been appointed to all her children. We see all the generations of plants and animals pass away as the generations of men pass away. We know that the bird which mounts with the gladdest song to heaven will soon be voiceless and motionless; we know that the beast which treads the forest with the lordliest step will soon roam its depths no more; just as we know that the crowds of busy men that throng our city streets will disappear, and the places that now know them will know them no more forever. And so we think that the same shadow has fallen upon all the children of the earth.

We find a certain sad consolation in this common fellowship, in the thought that the doom of mortality has fallen upon all alike;

but we are wrong. Though all pass through the valley of death, all do not feel the shadow of it. Man stands alone in the consciousness of mortality. To him alone the secret has been whispered. He alone has gazed down into the black gulf that waits for all. The bird lives, so far as its consciousness is concerned, an eternal life. It knows no limit. Its moments are simply the moments of eternity. It lives as if upon the crumbs fallen from the eternal seats. So it is with all the lower forms of the animal creation: they all live as if in an eternal life. Death, if they know anything about it, is the solitary exception, not the rule. Though they shrink from it, they do not know what it is. You know the method sometimes taken to break a horse. His throat is grasped till he is almost dead. After that, his spirit is broken: it is weak and submissive. Such chill and terror has this shadow when it rests, even for a moment, upon the lower world of life. But man lives in this shadow. The universality of death is one of the earliest results of his generalization, as it is one of the most certain. When the logics would give the most common and simple example of reasoning, one that will be un-



derstood and accepted by all, they give the outline of an argument based upon the mortality of all men. This one premise all will accept without question—so simple, so universal, is this first truth.

What does it mean,—this strange fact, that to man alone, the highest of all, the noblest of all, the terrible secret has been revealed? that he stands amid the lower tribes of unconscious and joyful creatures, as a man might stand watching the unconscious play of children in a ship which he knew was slowly but certainly filling and sinking? What does it mean? Does it mean that the world is a mockery and a deceit? It would mean this if it did not mean the opposite. What it does mean is this, that to man is revealed the finiteness of the earthly life, because to him is revealed the infiniteness of the eternal life. In life, knowledge of limit comes only with the power to pass the limit. The plant is fixed to a single spot of earth. It has no power of movement; and it has no senses, and no impulses, that go beyond the point where it is fixed. To the animal, this limitation would be bondage. The animal has senses that reach to other objects, the impulse to

move among them ; and, with the impulse, it has the power of such movement. But still all its thoughts, as well as its movements, seem bound to the earth. Man goes a step farther. To him are given thoughts and senses which go beyond the visible things of earth ; and with these he feels that there has been given him a power of freer movement, a life not dependent upon the earth. Thus man alone is led to see the barrier which is fixed before this earthly life, because he alone sees over it and beyond it.

Unless these two revelations came together, unless with the revelation of death came also the revelation of life, the whole would end in mockery ; but the two have come together. Whence the first whisper came that promised a new and higher life, we do not know ; but the whole world has heard it. Hardly a tribe has sunk so low, that it has not heard, in some distorted shape or other, this whisper of hope. Geology, exposing among the fossil memorials of ages long-past the relics of funeral feasts, and indications of offerings to the spirits of the dead, traces back the belief in a future state to times long anterior to history and tradition.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Lyell's "Antiquity of Man," p. 193.

As human life has advanced, this faith has grown clearer. The race of man has found, more and more, that its life was not shut up within the things of time and sense. Its thoughts, that wander through eternity, make it know itself to be the child of eternity.

The demonstration of the being of God demonstrates the existence of a spiritual realm unseen by bodily sight. And when the spirit comes to know that it is in God that it lives and moves, and has its being, it knows, that, since its life is in him, it is not dependent upon outward things and outward changes. When you find in an acorn the germ of an oak, you know something of the duration which is appointed to the life of which the acorn is the earliest form. The thought of God in the human soul is the germ of infinity.

Thus we overlook the barrier of death; thus we are prepared to receive whatever comes to us with clear authentication as a revelation from the unseen world. When the love of Christ flashes back upon his disciples from the midst of the unseen glories, we rejoice in the light that comes to us; when the faces of the dying are visibly smitten

with a brightness from a source which is to us invisible, we rejoice in the reflected radiance; and when, in those moments in which the power of the flesh is weakest, familiar forms and voices, to us unseen and unheard, greet the departing saint, we rejoice, not doubting in these manifestations of a higher life.

If you ask for the details of this coming life, for minute pictures of its relations and its scenes, we must be silent. We can only speak of an infinite hope that cheers us, and supports us, and lures us on.

Does the Bible, does Christ himself, give us more than this? Christ utters certain parables, the scene of which is laid in the future life; but the object of them is to reveal to us the relations of this life, not to picture to us the details of that. For the most part, the New Testament throws us back upon our ignorance; but, just as we are ready to despair of knowing anything, there flashes upon our souls the glory of this infinite hope. Thus we read, that "Eye hath not seen, neither hath the ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him;" but, in the next

breath, we are told that God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit. And John says to us, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be;" and then, just as we are beginning to despair of knowing anything, follows the great hope, that cannot be suppressed: "but we know, that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

At this ignorance we cannot wonder. No revelation can come before its time. Life itself is the only revelation of life. Were we taken bodily into the celestial realms, could they be revealed to our bodily sight, we could not discern their true nature. The full and busy life of mature men and women lies open to the child; but how little does the child know of its meaning! Even when the child imitates the acts of manhood, what does the mimic banker or preacher or politician know of the anxiety, of the passionate eagerness, of life! We are but children: how could the relations and the details of the maturity that awaits us be revealed to our comprehension! Let a person who has no ear for music be taken into a hall which is filled with some grand harmony. He hears the sounds, the very sounds, that con-



vey to another almost the greatest joy which he can know, that open to him the rapture almost of heaven itself. To the first, the tuning of the instruments conveyed as much. Thus impossible is it for the spirit to receive any revelation, though it be poured into its very ears, and pictured to its very eyes, before it is ready to receive it.

But, though this ignorance of detail must be accepted and insisted upon, none the less are there certain large and general principles that must guide our thought, and on which we may place firm reliance. It is with our thought of our future life something as it is with our thought of some far-off planet. If one should undertake to draw for us pictures of the planet, to tell us "its rocks are like this, and its flowers like this, and its inhabitants like this;" if he should give the detail of family and state life, of government and education, — we should listen to his words without an approach to confidence: we should see in them only a pleasant fiction or a moral lesson, or else look upon them as idle babbling. But there are some things which we do know in regard to this far-off planet as certainly as if we had trodden its continents, or sailed upon its seas. We

know that the law of gravitation is as mighty there as it is here ; that the laws of chemical action and composition are the same there that they are here ; that all the fundamental laws of material existence are the same there that they are here. Of the same nature is our knowledge of the life to come ; only, in this case, we have to do with spiritual laws and forces instead of with material. The fundamental principles of spiritual life are the same under all circumstances, at all times, in time and in eternity. The love of God — that great fact which is in our religious thought what the great law of gravitation is in our thought of material things — always is and always will be absolute. In regard to any theory or picture of the future life, we may ask, Does it absolutely and fundamentally contradict our faith in the infinite love of God ? If it do, we can dismiss it as false, with the same confidence with which we should dismiss as false any guess in regard to the planet which I spoke of, that should contradict the absoluteness of the law of gravitation.

We may go even a little farther than this. All spiritual laws and relationships must remain the same. We are like the children

of some family in the Old World, about to emigrate to the New. What does the child know, what can he guess, of the scenes that will open before him? Can he understand from anything he has ever seen, of the meaning of the words, "forest," "lake," and "prairie"? Perhaps the language will be different from anything he has ever heard before. Of all this the child knows nothing, and can know nothing; but he does know that father and mother, brother and sister, will be with him, and, knowing this, he is content. Where they are is home; and, where home is, he is glad to be. So we stand upon the brink of the dim ocean, and let our thoughts stretch and strive to look forward to the life that is beyond. The whole is vague and shadowy to us. But we know that the great Father of all souls will be there; we know that our brothers and sisters will be there; and, where these are, our spirits may feel themselves at home.

To speak more definitely, we may say, that, in death, the body dies, and that alone. If we can determine what belongs to the body, and what belongs to the spirit, then we can understand what will die with the body, and what will live on in spite of the

body's death. Let us apply this principle to certain views that are more or less commonly held in regard to death.

There are views of death that make it the one great, decisive moment of existence. One of these is, that, when the body dies, all possibility of sin dies with it; that the death of the body is and always must be the regeneration of the soul. If sin were of the body, the death of the body would be the death of sin; but though the saints of all ages have striven with the body, have tortured it and starved it, believing that the sin was in it, and in it alone, yet sin is not of the body, but of the spirit. If sin were in the world, in the circumstances by which the body is surrounded, then to die out of the world would be to escape from sin. Moralists and saints have disowned the world as they have disowned the body; they have denounced the world; they have sought to flee from the world, thinking that thereby they could flee from sin. We might think, indeed, that, when the soul is free from the temptations that are about it here, it might be free from the sin that these have caused. The miser, the defrauder, the sensualist, will not be beset by the temptations that here

have wrought his ruin. All the circumstances of life will have been changed. But sin is not in the circumstances about us. It is not in the world any more than it is in the body. There is not an object, as there is not a power on the earth, which was not meant for good. Money, which we call the root of all evil, is the great instrument of civilization. That wild passion which has blasted so many a heart, and blackened so many a life, was meant to kindle the pure flame of the domestic hearthstone. That ambition which has raged through so many a land was meant to be an incentive to honorable toil. No ! the sin is in the soul, not in its surroundings ; and, though the very forms and powers of heaven were about it, the selfish soul would find some way to make them serve its selfish ends ; or, if it could not, it would torment itself with its own failures, or heaven would be heaven no longer.

If the death of the body is not the death of the evil which is in the soul, still less can it be the death of the good which is in the soul. Perhaps the most common view of the future life falls into both the errors which I have just named. It draws a line which



separates the world of living men and women into two classes. Those who stand on one side of this line are good ; and, when they die, all the evil that is in them perishes : they become perfectly pure and holy, and pass at once into a state of endless peace and blessedness. Those who stand on the other side of the line are evil ; and, when they die, all the good that is in them perishes, — all the kindness and love, all the impulses of a noble generosity, all the power of self-sacrifice : they become wholly evil, and pass at once into a state of hopeless and endless misery. But who in this world of ours is good, and who is evil ? How would it be possible to draw such a line, which would not cut through many a heart, nay, that would not cut through every heart ?

And what is the bad, that its death should accomplish a change like this ? If it were the spirit that died, the body might be left in this unchangeableness,

“ Fixed in an eternal state.”

But the very nature of the spirit is change : its very life is progress. How shall the death of the body thus transform it ?

No : death is a sleep and an awaking ;

and we must believe that the soul emerges from the darkness of this sleep such as it was when it entered into it. The spirit will stand forth beautiful or deformed, pure or defiled, strong or weak, complete or imperfect, healthful or diseased, according to its nature while it was living, half concealed, in this tabernacle of flesh. But so far as the consciousness of the spirit, and its appearance are concerned, there is between the two lives one immense difference. I have said that sin is not of the body, but of the soul. It is true, at the same time, that much that we call sin is of the body. Every wrong act committed leaves its mark upon the brain. Habit, working through the body, chains the spirit to its past self, even when it would forsake its past self. The faults or the sins or the mistakes of parents leave their marks upon their children, give them weights to carry through life. The very weakness and disorder of the physical system, of brain and nerves, make themselves felt in the life. No person who strives after the highest life is able to fulfil even his own highest thought of life. How many persons do we see struggling with some false tendency,

which is always tripping them up when they would least have it so! How many drunkards struggle against their terrible thirst, with a purpose and an aspiration that would win them sainthood, were it not for this terrible enemy! How many men and women struggle against some infirmity of temper that besets them, because their nerves are all jangled, and out of tune! How many such struggles are carried on in life we cannot know. They are fought in the very secret places of the soul. The brave struggler after peace and love and purity, and a lofty faith, feels himself often vanquished in the fight. There is a law in his members, struggling against the law in his spirit: so that what he would he does not, and what he would not that he does. Death, we may believe, puts an end to this struggle: it unbinds the soul. The spirit that has thus struggled stands forth free, strong, erect, pure, glad. It mounts with a sudden flight up to the heights towards which it has been struggling so long. It fulfils its own ideal. Loftier heights will be yet before it; grander ideals will lure it on: but what it longed to be, what it strove to be, it has become.

What a revelation of life it would be to us, if we could see the spirits that thus emerge, clean out of the mire of life, pure out of its pollution, peaceful out of its strife, exalted out of its degradation, victorious out of its defeats !

There is another side to the picture. If some appear worse than they really are, there are others who appear better than they really are. The circumstances that drag down the first buoy up these. With the body death strips away all the outward circumstances of life. All the advantages of birth, of outward dignity, of position in society, — all these are stripped off from the soul. It sees itself, and is seen, as it has been all along in the sight of God, naked and open in the presence of him with whom it has to do. The restraints of life are removed ; the soul can act itself. There is an ideal of evil as well as an ideal of good ; there is a looking-downward as well as a looking-up ; there is a love of the low, of the depraved, of the selfish. Death, we believe, leaves the spirit free to follow its own gravitation. He that has struggled after the right and the good, whose heart has been filled with the aspiration of love, — such an

humble, God-loving, and man-loving spirit shall mount up into the realms of blessedness and peace; while those whose love has been downwards, and not up, shall fall — whither shall they fall? We read that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Would it not be a more fearful thing to fall out of the hands of the living God? It is a fearful thing, the poor wounded soldier feels, to pass into the hands of the surgeon; but yet he thanks God, even though with fear and dread, for the surgeon's skill. It is the wound that is dreadful: the care that probes it, and binds it up, is blessed.

Sin is a fearful thing: it is the one dreadful thing in God's universe; and blessed is any discipline that shall free the spirit from its power. We must not forget the fundamental law with which we started, — the law of God's infinite love. The comet seems to try to shoot from the warm and shining centre of the system into the outer darkness: can you draw the line that shall mark the course and the limit of its wandering? We only know that the great law of gravitation does never let it go, that at last it draws it back again into the light and warmth: so we believe that the love of God follows the

sinner in his course. No soul can wander beyond the reach of God's protecting hand. The love of God is infinite; and it shall yet triumph over all things. We cannot understand God's method; we cannot anticipate his ways. We know not what discipline, what experience, may be demanded, what paths may be the best. He knows, and he has the power to choose.

We hear men speak, sometimes, of the lost. There are spirits that seem lost; but did you ever see one that was wholly lost? You read of a single act of a man, and you think his nature was wholly in that: if the act was evil, you think of him as wholly evil. But did you ever see a man that was wholly evil? that had not a single spark left that could be kindled into a flame? that was utterly broken, so that there was no possibility of an influx of strength? Nay, among those who are most the prey of the most shameless vice, do you not often find a generosity, a free nobility, of soul that puts to shame the calculating virtue of those who would shrink from the very touch of these polluted ones? And shall He who does not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, not find a way to save that

which is left, to breathe with his Spirit upon the smoking embers, to bind up the bruised reed? Thus we stand by the side of every grave in hope, we follow the course of every spirit with trust. We believe that in the Father's house are many mansions; that every prodigal shall at some time leave his pollution, and be welcomed home; that at last God's great family shall be complete.

Shall we seek to make real to our hearts the joy and the promise of that waiting home? Consider, then, that all the truth, all the joy, all the life, of this present world, is of the spirit. You loved your friend. What was it you loved in him? It was his love, his nobleness, his aspiration, his self-forgetfulness. These were of the spirit. The outward presence that you rejoiced in was but the revelation of the spirit. It was this that looked from the eyes, and smiled through the lips, and uttered itself in the voice. Thus, when this outward presence perished, the friend remained, the love loved on; though the body's lips are hushed, soul can still utter itself to soul. Nay, we may believe, that, after the body's death, there is often a closer union between soul and soul than when each could only half

express itself through the poor medium of the flesh. And what this outer presence was to your friend, that is the universe to God : it is his glory that flashes from the heavens ; the strength of the hills is his strength ; the beauty of the flower is his beauty ; the love of all spirits is his love. What, then, that is dear and precious to us will be lost, though the heavens should be rolled together as a scroll, and all the visible forms of things should perish? This outward world is only the hint of the spiritual world, — a veil that half reveals, and half conceals, its glory. Whatever is highest here, that is the truest. Thus we look forward and upward,

“ Knowing that what is excellent,  
As God lives, is permanent.”

If we would form a picture of the heavenly life, we have, then, only to take what is most divine in the earthly life. The gladness of thought, the communion of love, the blessedness of service, the ecstasy of worship, the contemplation of the divine, — these are of the spirit, and partake of its eternity. The contemplation of the divine, — the words may sound cold and meaningless ; but if it be true, as was just affirmed, that whatever



thrills us in the grandeur and beauty of the earth is only a hint of the presence of God, what joy must come from the ever higher and higher manifestation of his presence !

Such is our belief in regard to the future life. Well would it be for us if it were indeed the faith of our inmost hearts. What darkness could gather on our way if we walked ever in the light of this hope ! O spirit ! weary with the burdens of life, O wanderer ! lost amid its mazes, O sinner ! struggling with some vice that wraps its folds ever more closely about you, O mourner ! stretching forth eager arms after the loved and lost, how blessed would ye be, how blessed would we all be, if we could open our hearts to the fulness of this promise, to the brightness of this hope !

And yet there is another lesson which the great truth we have considered may bring home to us. If we must take of the materials of our earthly life to form our thought of heaven, does it not follow that we may take our thought of heaven to shape our earthly life ? Is not the material at hand ? Is not love here ? Is there not opportunity of service ? Is not God here ? Let us not forget that our eternal life has begun already ;

and while we look forward to a more complete fulfilment, to new and higher possibilities, let us take the present also in its fulness, and, if we cannot reach the height of the angelic joy, strive after that which is better and nobler,—strive to enter, even here, upon the angelic service.

THE KNOWN AND THE UN-  
KNOWABLE IN RELIGION



## THE KNOWN AND THE UN- KNOWABLE IN RELIGION

WE have a homelike feeling shut in as we are by the incrustation of habit, otherwise I do not know how we could escape the constant sense of wonder and awe at the mystery of the universe. The Englishman on his little island forgets that his island is not a continent. He almost forgets that it is not the world. So we, on our little island of the known, forget the mighty ocean of the unknown and the unknowable that stretches about us. Yet no one can always escape the consciousness of this. Many have some special riddle, some one point, where they feel the impotence of their knowledge, feel how little science or philosophy or theology can do towards solving the question that haunts them. We speak of immortality as explaining the mystery of life, but it simply postpones an explanation, simply gives the possibility of such an explanation. And then of the teeming life

about us, of the life of flower, of forest, of beast, of the life of the geologic epochs, of monster and reptile, of all this, the doctrine of immortality, at least as it is ordinarily held, says nothing. Theodore Parker understood as well as any other the meaning of suffering and the blessing of it. He understood it so well that it furnished the ground of his wonder. The form in which the mystery of the universe seems to have met him is this: How to understand the suffering of the lower animals and their cruelty towards one another. Human suffering, human cruelty, he could understand, but the suffering of the beast without apparent end or compensation, he could not understand. Robertson understood as well as any other the great law of duty and the healthfulness of retribution for sin. But as always the darkest mystery lies closest to what is best understood, so the great form in which the world's riddle presented itself to him was this: Why should our heaviest sufferings come commonly not from our faults, but from our mistakes? Why should error cause more suffering than sin? I knew one man to whom the great riddle of the world appeared to put itself in this form:

Why should we be encouraged and impelled to cultivate and beautify the earth, to work early and late to raise flower and fruit, while insects were at the same time sent forth to oppose us, meeting us, at every point, with some special warfare of destruction, fitted each by its special instinct and construction to undo all our work. I say this was the form in which the riddle seemed to present itself to him, though doubtless this presentation was only the symbol of the blighted hopes and baffled struggles of life.

And, after all, these special examples that I have referred to are only varied forms of one mystery, that of suffering and sorrow, a mystery that every man must face sooner or later. We may have an answer ready to the questions that arise in regard to the general suffering and sorrow of life. We may have our theory at our tongues' end. We may say there must be sorrow, for through it alone come the highest spiritual gains; but when the form of sorrow enters our own door, that form, in the shadow of which the beauty and brightness of life seem to wither and fade away, when the iron hand of suffering seizes our own frame with a grasp against which we vainly struggle, then

the mystery which we had thought vanquished and vanished comes back with new vastness and power. Then, if not before, the question presses, "Could not an omnipotent and all-wise Creator have established a different relation of things? or are there in the moral and spiritual world, as in the arithmetical and geometrical world, relations which even omnipotence must recognize, which even it cannot set aside?"

And this in its turn is only one form of the great mystery of the universe. God is infinite and man is finite; how then can the finite comprehend the infinite? If his ways are not as our ways, his thoughts are not as our thoughts, do not our most common words lose their meaning, lose all meaning, when applied to him?

Thus we are like dwellers in the cottage of a lighthouse, upon some solitary island. We look each from his little window and see mystery in that one direction. But when we ascend the tower and look about us we unite these scattered views, and see that we are surrounded by the mighty ocean of the unknown and unknowable. We feel the presence of that infinite and incomprehensible power which is in all things



and through all things, which is under and over all.

It is singular that, while theology has been growing more and more comprehensible, suiting itself to the tenderest capacities, while what we call orthodox theology is growing more and more simple and rational, and liberal theology is priding itself upon becoming wholly simple and rational, all at once this sense of mystery should come back and flood the whole, like an ocean exulting over broken and buried dykes. In this age of rationalism, Herbert Spencer, who represents the extreme of rationalism, who is looked upon by many as the leader of the liberal movement in England and America, affirms that the religious sense is nothing but the sense of mystery, that religion is only the recognition of the incomprehensibility which is at the heart of all things, and the awe in the presence of this mystery. And this form of speech is continually meeting us. It is a formula adopted by many of the leading thinkers of the time.

It is certain that in many forms of religion this sense of mystery is very prominent. In parts of the Hindoo literature it stands out to the exclusion of everything besides.

In the book of Job, in the creeds and worship of the mediæval church, we feel its power. Indeed there is perhaps no deep religious literature that does not sooner or later give utterance to it. Tertullian uttered the principle of this form of thought when he cried, "It is credible because it is foolish. It is certain because it is impossible." He knew that human thought could not comprehend the infinite. He knew that when the divine truth appeared to him it would stretch before him vast and immeasurable. So when among the familiar facts of life, among the familiar truths of thought, there arose one shadowy and huge, not to be defined, not to be taken in by the gaze of the grandest soul, he felt that it was for that very reason divine, and he worshipped before it. Balboa and his brave followers, after their dreary and toilsome pilgrimage through the wilderness of the Isthmus, reached a height from which an ocean different from the one that they had left behind them burst upon their gaze. They shouted, in glad surprise, "The sea! the sea!" and their leader, rearing the cross, poured out their common thanksgiving to God. How did they know that it was the sea? Did they

discern the navies of the world floating upon it? Did they see the rich shores of India skirting its farthest edge? Did they see the capitals of the world drawing tribute from it? Did they see all this, and did they by these marks know that it was the ocean? Nothing of all this they saw; only a hazy stretch of water with no boundary line. They believed that it was the ocean because they could not see across it. In such a spirit cried that reverent soul of whom I spoke. "It is credible because it is impossible."

Mystery, then, has its place in religion, but, according to Herbert Spencer, religion is all mystery. This involves two statements. The first is that the only element common to all religions is the sense of mystery; the second is that in this recognition lie all the truth and power of religion.

The highest flight of religious ecstasy, then, has been the recognition of the insoluble mystery; the fullest praise to God, in fact, as well as in theory, has been to say to him, "We know nothing of thee or of thy attributes." Strangely must one have listened to the utterances of religious souls through all the history of the world, to gain from them an impression like this. The

prayers and hymns, in which the very life of the purest and noblest souls has uttered itself, have indeed recognized a mystery, but they have been filled with a sense of something that was not mystery. Moreover, the mystery in the presence of which these souls have bowed themselves was not the cold abstraction of mystery. It was not simply the Unknowable. The mystery grew out of and gathered about that which was known. Men did not begin with the mystery, and seek to bridge it over with fine words. They began with what was known, with what was simple and clear as the facts of daily life; but this stretched, as they gazed upon it, till it assumed measureless proportions; and what was simple as a child's thought overawed them with its infinite vastness. So the waves of the ocean ripple up the beach, and the child may run races with them, or may dig his little wells for them to fill; but he who launches on the ocean finds it stretching before him and beneath him and about him with a vastness that the imagination cannot grasp.

To the religious thinker the mystery was always a mystery of something. With Paul it was love that furnished the mystery. He

bade us know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. He knew what love was well enough; he had sung its praises as no one else had done. It was only the measurelessness of the love that he could not comprehend. Sometimes it has been the collision of two mighty principles that caused the mystery, each of which was clear enough, and each of which was felt to be supreme by its own right; but the reign of each seemed to dethrone the other, and the awed soul could simply yield its allegiance to each, and watch the strife in which it could be neither neutral nor partisan. Sometimes the mystery has arisen from the conflict of truth with prejudice and mistake that claimed the sanctity of truth. But, whatever has been the source of the mystery, knowledge, positive faith, has been its centre. The strains that uttered the sense of mystery have formed only a deep undertone to the songs that chanted the real faith and aspiration of the soul.

Herbert Spencer says, with a certain truth, that it is as religion is developed that the sense of mystery becomes more strong. A better statement would be that it is as the simple natural religious faith is beginning to

spend itself, is beginning to pass into speculation, that this sense becomes marked. At the birth of a religion, at the moment when it is most religious, then it is most full of confidence, and sees the horizon most clear about it. Even when the reflective stage of which I spoke begins, this simple confidence, in most cases, still is prominent. David was full of trust in the Lord who was his shepherd, who cared for him as he cared for his flocks. Job, coming later, was filled with the awe of the Unknown and the Unknowable; yet even Job cried with a confident earnestness that the sweetest strains of our modern song strive to echo for us, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." I do not remember that Jesus, with whom religion entered upon a new life, ever spoke of the Unknowable. He lived like a child in the sunlight of a father's smile. With Paul the reflective stage had already begun; yet he could say, with a careful thoughtfulness that added weight to his words, "Now I know in part." Even when the simplicity of religion became overlaid with questioning, the old confidence was not lost. Augustine did much to draw about the Christian spirit the mists of speculation, to torment it with

insoluble riddles. Yet, when bewildered by the mysteries of infinitude he had exclaimed, "Who art thou, then, my God?" he could answer, "What but the Lord God, . . . most highest, most good, most potent, most omnipotent; most merciful, yet most just."

The same is true of other religions. The Hindoo religion began with hymns full of confidence in themselves and in their object. The later hymns first began to utter the voice of questioning and of awe before the Unknown. It was centuries later that the Unknowable was put in the place of God; and to be incomprehensible was felt to be the *proprium* of divinity, so that it was defined when it was called the undefinable. This was the transformation of religion into philosophy. It was not the development of religion: it was its decay. But the religious heart of the nation could not rest with this. Religion again affirmed itself, — a religion that had its darkness and its terror and its mystery, but which had also its faith and its promise.

Thus in all forms of religion the central and essential thing has been something other than mystery. The element that is the common bond between all religions is not

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negative, but positive. Men have believed that there was a power about them or above them, — a power distinct from and mightier than the ordinary forces of nature, to which they could trust. Sometimes, as with the poor fetich-worshipper, it dwelt in the stocks and stones of earth ; sometimes, as with the polytheist, it was broken up into shining points ; sometimes, as with the monotheist, it was gathered about one luminous centre ; sometimes, as with the Hebrew, it was a power “that made for righteousness ;” sometimes, as with John, it was love, or, as with Jesus, it was spirit. One nation has called it by one name and another by another ; one has perceived it more dimly, another more clearly ; one has attached one limitation to it, another has attached another ; sometimes it has reflected more and sometimes less of our human imperfections, as the deep midnight heaven reflects the glare of a city’s lamps, — but all have united in this, that there was something that one could trust to. Out from all limitations and contradictions appeared this fact of a power of helpfulness. So the tenderness and sympathy of Buddha shone out from the black despair that formed the background of his



teaching. So the love of Jesus shone out from the dark mystery of the mediæval creeds. Men may pray to a mystery, but they cannot praise it; they may bring offerings to it, but they cannot trust it; they may seek in ways chosen at random to soothe it, or win its favor, but they cannot love it: and take out of religion praise and trust and love, and not only its best beauty, but its best reality, will be gone.

But though the element common to all religions is knowledge rather than ignorance, the known rather than the unknowable, perhaps the other part of the statement of Herbert Spencer is true. Perhaps all this has been a mistake, and all the truth there has been in religion has been that minor part, namely, the sense of awe in the presence of mystery. Here it may be helpful to notice the sense in which the phrase that speaks of the unknowable is used by those who would make religion consist wholly in the recognition of this. To state the proposition in its most simple and general terms, it is this: Take away all that we know from any object and we should not know what was left. To state the proposition in a phrase that would be better recognized by

those who use it, we are familiar with relations, but of that which is behind and within relations, we know nothing. We do not know what anything is in itself. We use the word "force," but the thought we attach to it involves contradictions. The word stands for something that is unknown by us. We do not even know our own souls. Spirit is as unknowable as matter. I think that if all this were fairly understood, the phrase that speaks of religion as having to do merely with the Unknowable would lose for many much of its terror. If it were understood that God is unknowable in the sense that our own souls are unknowable, I think that many would be content to leave the matter so.

Here we meet a fact that may throw still more light upon our theme. Herbert Spencer, and those who agree with him, show that the words "matter" and "force," and kindred terms, stand simply for the Unknowable, and yet they continue to use them. The reason for this is that the course of things is the same as it would be if the words stood for something known. They are thus relatively, though not actually, true. Your watch may be wholly wrong, and yet

relatively right. You cannot tell the time by it, but you can measure off by it the hours and minutes as they pass. After, then, all this demonstration that science as well as religion ends in a mystery, science keeps on its old course as if nothing had happened. It uses its old words. It talks about time and space, and force and motion, as if the words had a meaning and a true one. Religion alone is expected to be bound by the new order. If it ventures to use its old words it is reproved for its presumption.

But why, I would ask, may not religion, as well as science, use its words, recognizing the relative truth that is in them? Few thinking men, however strong their religious faith, have, I think, used the terms of religion, accepting them as true in their gross literalness. Here is the source of the contradiction which Herbert Spencer has pointed out between the professions both of knowledge and ignorance on the part of religious thinkers. The knowledge was relative, but yet practically real. God's ways are not as our ways. Our love is but a symbol of his love, our righteousness of his righteousness, our spirituality of his nature. But though the

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words are relative, they are relatively true. The course of things is the same as if they were true. If there is "a power not ourselves that makes for righteousness," if without us, and yet more clearly within us, it upholds the right and marks the evil with its condemnation, why should we not call it holy? If it confers upon us all the blessings of life, and when these outward goods are lost, it bestows, often, a still greater blessing, why should we not call it good? If it chooses the best ways to reach its chosen ends, if under its guidance all things fit together to form a perfect whole, why should we not call it wise? If the soul feels it nearer to it than itself, if it finds in it a tender and sublime companionship, if there flows from it a helpful sympathy in sorrow, and in gladness a blessing sweeter than the joy, why should it not ascribe to it the attribute of love? And when it has used in regard to it the words "holiness," "wisdom," and "love," why need it hesitate to use in regard to it the word "spirit"?<sup>1</sup> We

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Fiske, in his valuable work entitled "Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy," says, "Provided we bear in mind the symbolic character of our words, we may say that 'God is Spirit'" (vol. ii., p. 449). This is an important con-

use these words because they are the best we have, and the truest because they are the best. When we speak of God under these terms, we speak with far more truth than when we speak of him simply as a power, or even as an unknowable power. If we know that the terms of spirit represent him more nearly than the terms of matter, then we speak of him most truly when we speak of him in the terms of spirit. When we look through these symbols we are looking towards him; when we approach him through these we are drawing near him. One who is lost in some vast cavern may wander hopelessly till he sees in one direction a gray glimmering that shows him in what direction he must turn to reach the outer light. This gray glimmering is not the daylight, but it points towards the daylight; and the wanderer who follows it, pressing in the direction where the darkness is least dense, is pressing towards the light. According to the very terms of the system which remands religion to the realm of the Un-

cession. I do not see, however, why reasoning similar to that by which this result was reached would not justify, with a like qualification, a like use of terms expressive of the highest spiritual activity.

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knowable, we may then have a practical working knowledge of religious truth, just as we have of scientific truth.

But I further claim for this knowledge that it is something more than merely a working formula. This may be illustrated, first, by the fact that there is absolutely no mystery without some knowledge. We could not even speak of the Unknowable without we had some knowledge of that of which we speak. The unknown is absolutely nothing till it is seen in connection with the known, just as the known is worth little till it is seen against the great background of the unknown. "Science," cries the ancient philosopher, "is born of wonder." "Nay," answers the modern, "wonder is born of science," and both are right. I have spoken of the mystery of the ocean, but I think that one does not get the fullest sense of this mystery and this sublimity when one is far out at sea, floating upon the ocean, shut in only by the circle of the horizon. For myself, I have felt the vastness and the infinitude of the ocean, much more while standing upon the shore and looking out upon its pathless waste, and seeing the waves roll up, one after another, the sloping beach,

or beat with the might of their gigantic strength against some rocky barrier, than I have when sailing on mid-ocean: for it is where land and water meet that we feel the sublimity of the land, which would bind the ocean, and the sublimity of the ocean which will not be bound! Thus it is in religion and in thought. The point of sublimity, nay, the point of real knowledge, is the point where the known and the unknown, the plain and the incomprehensible, touch one another.

There is, I repeat, no mystery without knowledge; and the more pressing the mystery the sharper and clearer must be the knowledge out of which it springs. The brute recognizes no mystery because its knowledge is insufficient. A single illustration will make this clear. I will suppose that none of you have ever heard the word "asymptote." When you hear the word for the first time it suggests no mystery, because it suggests no meaning. I explain the word to you. I tell you that an asymptote is a line which is continually approaching a curved line, but that however long the lines might be drawn they would never meet. With this explanation you begin to see

something of the mystery that the word involves. But still the mystery does not press upon you, for my words in regard to it sound foolish, and you attach little meaning to them. But if you study mathematics for yourself, if you study the mathematical formula for this line, if you see it proved by absolute demonstration that the one line is always approaching the other but can never reach it, then you will feel the full power of the mystery, because you have at last reached some full and definite knowledge.

Our knowledge, then, though partial, must be real. This will appear more clearly, if in the next place we examine more closely the sense in which our knowledge is denied. We know, it is said, things only in their relations, and not as they are in themselves. But things exist only in relations; out of these they are nothing. If we know them out of these relations we should know them falsely. We know of soul only that it thinks and feels. Its very being is to think and feel; apart from thinking and feeling it is nothing. If we know of anything only its relations to ourselves, we know so much about it really and truly. An object really is, even in the slightest and weakest manifestations of itself,



just as the ocean is in every little wave that ripples and breaks at your feet. When you see these you see the ocean; when you touch them you touch the ocean. You are asked what you know of your dearest friend in himself; you know his smile, his form, his voice, his love, his nobleness, but these, you are told, are attributes only. But you know that your friend is in those words and tones and looks and acts that are so dear to you. They are all manifestations and revelations of him.

You do not know God in himself. Thank him that you have no necessity to do this, for the universe is full of his manifestation of himself.

The simple fact that throws light on these mixed questions and may solve our doubts is this, that *God is in the known as much and as truly as he is in the unknown*. If we could fairly take this thought into our minds we should have the truth of religion. If we could take it into our hearts, we should have the reality of religion.

Since all things proceed from God all things must be full of him and must bear some revelation of him. His presence is in the world about us and the heavens over us,

in the past behind us, and in the future before us. The little flower that opens at our feet comes forth from this unseen power that we call God, and brings its revelation. The magnificent order of the universe, the majestic regularity of the earth and the heavens, are simply manifestations and revelations of him. Some see God mainly in this order and regularity. When they trace out a law they feel that they have discovered the footsteps of God. Others see him in the uncomprehended and incomprehensible. The grand truth is that God is in both. The mother's love that watched over your childhood was a revelation of God. It was his love that looked through her eyes and sheltered you in her arms. The love of Christ was a revelation of God. Jesus was no stranger and foreigner. He also came forth from the great power which is within and behind and above all things. Can you comprehend the height and the depth, the length and the breadth of the love of God, which was manifested in Jesus Christ, that which Paul tells us passes knowledge? Its height is as high as heaven, its depth is as deep as sin, its length is as long as eternity, its breadth as broad as humanity. Thus Jesus

loved. His love stooped to the lowest sinners, it stooped to those who mocked and crucified him. It lifted them up with its last prayer to God. This was the love of God, for without God Jesus was nothing.

But is there not evil as well as good in the universe, and does not this also manifest God? Did not Judas as well as Jesus come forth from him?

You go through the galleries of a sculptor. You see works in every degree and stage of completion. Here is a block of marble where you can see, just hinted at, some form of man. Here is one where the form has half emerged. Here, one that as yet is only pitted and disfigured by the master's blows. Here, at last, you reach the perfect triumph of his skill. - It stands light, graceful, beautiful, instinct with a life higher than human. Do you doubt in which work the master displays himself? Such an artist's gallery is the world. Now the spirit is buried in the sensual, now half revealed through it. Here it stands in its unveiled splendor. Do you doubt which best displays the spirit and power of Him who is all in all? He is in all, but you cannot find him in all. You do not know the method of his art. You do

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not understand the blows, sharp and terrible often, that are needed to evolve beauty out of the formless. But though you know not the method of his art, you recognize its end, and you recognize the master in this end.

But God does not manifest himself outside of us alone, but within us also. His life is in us, and in him we live. Our spirit somehow answers to his spirit. The deeps of our being answer to the deeps of his, as the waters of the sheltered bay feel the drawings of the tidal flow of the ocean.

Such is the relation between mystery and knowledge, the known and the unknowable, in religion. We need them both.

We need the sense of mystery to humble our spirits, and to awaken them by its mighty challenge. We need the simplicity of religion to be the light and comfort and strength of our lives; and with all the mystery let us never forget the limitation of the mystery. There is a sense in which love is always love, and right is always right, and reason always reason. There is a vast formula of love that will take in the love of God as well as the love of the child. We may not comprehend this love, but we can recognize it, and know something of what it

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is. The child lies in its mother's arms. It cannot comprehend the source and strength and compass of her love. Yet it recognizes that love. It rests in it, and is content. In like manner may we rest peaceful and content, while we know that love that passeth knowledge.



# MYSTICISM





## MYSTICISM

HERBERT SPENCER has affirmed that the one essential principle of religion is the sense of mystery. We have about us the visible world of things. Each of these things stands in definite relations with the things about it. These relations we can understand ; or at least we can put them into formulas which seem clear to the understanding. But we feel that behind these visible things and these finite relations there is a something which we cannot see, which we cannot put into formulas, and which, thus, we cannot even pretend to understand. This unknowable something is a power present in all things, manifesting itself in all things, the life of all things ; but though it is always manifesting itself, it can never make itself known ; though so near us, it can never be grasped. It remains ever the infinite, the unknown. The consciousness of the reality of this unknowable power is, according to Spencer, the element peculiar to all religions, the only element that may properly be called religious.

The definition of religion, as given by Herbert Spencer, tells only half the story. There is another element which is essential to religion and which is common to all religions. There is light in religion as well as darkness. If God dwells in the darkness He dwells also in the light, and the darkness and the light are alike filled with His presence. I refer, however, at this time to the position of Herbert Spencer, not to criticise it, not to attempt to supply its deficiency, but to recognize its real though partial truth. The sense of mystery is not the only element of religion, but it is an essential element of it ; an element too much lost sight of in these days of brilliant, though largely superficial thought. The religious world owes a debt of gratitude to Herbert Spencer for bringing back to its consciousness so forcibly the great fact of this essential principle of mystery. We are apt to forget that much as we need to know, just so much do we need to feel the presence of the unknowable. We are apt to look upon the mountain of truth only as a ledge to be quarried. We are so busied with our machinery of one sort and another for drilling and blowing, for raising and shaping

and carrying, so pleased with the smoothly hammered blocks which attest our labor and our skill, that we forget to look up at the sublime vastness of the mountain, at its precipitous sides, at the clouds which veil forever its snowy and inaccessible summit. And yet the mountain in its wholeness may be more helpful to us than in its fragments. All the architecture in which these fragments may be embodied are puny in comparison with it. All the physical luxury to which they may minister is as nothing compared with the vigor which the sense of its sublimity may bring to the spirit. So, also, our square-hewn truths, however fair, however wonderful, are as nothing to the infinitude of truth. The spirit of man needs to feel its strength. It is well that among the finite things about it, it should feel strong, proud, and defiant; that it should come to the world as a conqueror to his realm; but it is well also that it should feel the presence of a mightier than it. There are minds to which the sense even of the sublimities of earth would be a salvation. Nowhere does the spirit show its greatness more than in the sense of awe, in the presence of the infinitudes of life and thought, and nowhere

does it gain greater strength than in such contemplation. Religion has at all times, and among all nations, recognized this element of the unknowable. "They best know Thee who confess that they do not know Thee," cried the Hindoo; "Canst thou know the Almighty to perfection?" exclaimed the Hebrew. And thus, wherever there has been a religion worthy of the name, there has been this solemn gladness, this bowed exaltation, this mighty helplessness, this blending of the deepest and loftiest of man's nature, which comes from the sense of knowing that which passes knowledge.

While religion has thus openly and triumphantly recognized the element of mystery as essential to its existence, it has, I believe, covertly, recognized the same thing in its ceremonies and creeds. I cannot understand how else many of these extravagant and sometimes even absurd forms and formulas should have taken such a hold upon the hearts of men. Take, for instance, some of the peculiarities of the Roman Catholic service. It seems sometimes absurd to see an ignorant worshipper taking part in a service conducted in a language which he cannot understand. A poor

Irish girl, for instance, worships through the Latin tongue. At least, however, she feels herself in the presence of a mystery behind which is the Divine; and if we take even the loftiest terms that we use in our English prayers, with realistic literalness, if we regard them as simply and wholly true, perhaps our worship may be more imperfect than hers. A divinity that could be wrapt in any terms however fair and sweet would be a living divinity no longer. So also the dimness of the Mediæval church, its wondrous music with its heights of joy and abysmal depths of sorrow, its architecture with its soaring arches and its gloomy crypts, all combined to force home this sense of mystery upon the soul. The creeds of the Mediæval church bringing together opposites in the same breath, setting at defiance the most fundamental laws of thought and reason, at least brought men into the presence of the unknown, and were doubtless helpful in this respect. I have spoken thus of the Mediæval church, but all religions have had their mysteries. The mysteries of the Greek must have brought a healthful spirit of awe and reverence into the midst of much that was superficial and frivolous in the Greek culture.

It would be interesting to consider the nature and the limit of this element of mystery that underlies all religion, to examine the forms under which it confronts us, and the light that comes to us through and around them. It would be interesting to consider the mystery that waits upon the finite soul, by reason of its very finiteness, when it strives to comprehend the infinite ; or to examine that mystery which meets us under every form of thought when we strive to reconcile the freedom of man with inevitable and invariable law, or with the all-embracing providence of God ; or it would be interesting to drop our plummets farther than sight could reach, down into the dark depths of the mystery of suffering and sin.

My object in this essay is, however, to consider one form of this mystery which underlies all others, and which, so far as the solution is possible, gives the only hint towards the solution of any of them. I mean that form of mystery which is involved in what is called mysticism.

The word "mysticism" is often used in a very vague manner. At first it is probable that it had no very definite signification, except as it referred to whatever was con-

nected with mystery in general, or with the so-called mysteries of religion in particular. But as the nature of this mystery and of these mysteries became more apparent, as the vital element of all began to manifest itself more distinctly from amid the hulls that enveloped it, the words "mystic" and "mysticism" assumed a very definite meaning, and this meaning, in spite of much vague and careless use, still belongs to them. The word "mysticism," whenever properly used, refers to the fact that all lives, however distinct they may appear, however varied may be their conditions and their ends, are at heart one; that they are the manifestations of a common element; that they all open into this common element and thus into one another. Merely philosophical mysticism calls this common element by one name or another according to the nature of the system. Religious mysticism finds this common element in the life of God. Mysticism, then, is the recognition of the universal element in all individual forms; religious mysticism finds everywhere the presence and power of the divine life.

Mysticism is so foreign to much of our modern habit of thinking; it is so foreign



to our habits of life; it is so foreign to that hard individualism which both our thinking and our living tend to nourish, that it may not be easy for all to enter into the spirit of it, or even to comprehend its meaning. Moreover the word has been associated with so much that is extravagant and absurd that it has somewhat fallen into disrepute. Those, most often, have been known as mystics in whom mysticism has run riot. But in spite of modern atomism and individualism, in spite of former extravagance and fanaticism, mysticism expresses the profoundest fact of our being. All the greatest thinkers and seers of the world have been more or less imbued with it. Modern creed makers and creed holders may disown it; but the religious founders, those on whose mighty foundations the creed makers rear their shapeless and unsubstantial fabrics, wrought from the intuition and the inspiration of the mystical view of life.

However distinct our little individual lives may seem, these mighty thinkers and seers have perceived that they had a common root and a common substance. Within and beneath all existences there is the being from which all spring and in which they all



exist. We ask the leaf, Are you complete in yourself? and the leaf answers, No, my life is in the branches. We ask the branch, and the branch answers, No, my life is in the trunk. We ask the trunk, and it answers, No, my life is in the root. We ask the root, and it answers, No, my life is in the trunk and the branches and the leaves; keep the branches stripped of leaves and I shall die. So is it with the great tree of being. Nothing is completely and merely individual. All are expressions, higher and lower, of a common life.

Illustrations of this fact may be found in the comparatively superficial relations of life in those realms which seem intermediate between the body and the mind. The relations of which I here speak are those which connect one life with another. They show a relation which is deeper than any that the senses can account for, and thus manifest a direct communication between one life and another. We see this in the great pulses of feeling which thrill through communities and assemblies. On a large scale we see it in the frenzy of a nation, a state of things which has found its most striking exemplification in the history of France; on a smaller

scale we see it in the enthusiasm or excitement of any crowd. There are occasions in which the calmest and most balanced mind is drawn into the common whirl and tumult of feeling, not from anything that has been said or done, but because the depths of the spirit are stirred by the mighty movements in the life about it. Such a common movement may be found, for instance, in the enthusiasm of the camp-meeting, which becomes filled with a common terror or a common fervor; and in the rout of some great army when a strange and inexplicable panic spreads from heart to heart. Such mighty stirrings of the common life suggest to us the movements of the sea. The fury of the waves is felt in every cove and inlet, however sheltered, that has a communication open with the ocean. When a great tidal wave sweeps over the sea the whole line of coast feels its power, and all the rivers that pour into it heave and swell with its influx. So do lives thrill and stir with the convulsions of the common life about them.

We find examples of this direct relation between life and life in individuals as well as in masses. There are spiritual harmonies

and discords from which result much of the happiness or unhappiness of life.

There are individuals who possess what is called magnetism. They attract or move or govern, we can hardly tell why. We can see that this is not mere association with the past history of such persons, that the effect does not arise merely because it is expected to arise, by the fact that animals are frequently affected in a similar way. They become submissive to one whose nature possesses this element; they wait upon his movements, they seem to live for him.

We see further illustrations of this inner relation between life and life in the communication that seems sometimes to flow from one life to another, in the case of friends closely bound together. Especially does this occur in the case of the death of one. Cases of this kind are so common that the German language has set apart a word to stand for this sort of communication. Sometimes the living friend appears to see the form of the one who has just died, sometimes the effect is less striking though not less real. This sort of connection between one life and another reaches its climax

in what is known as animal magnetism. In this the independent will and consciousness of the one is entirely given up. The whole nature is taken possession of by another. The will, the thought, the emotions, and the sensations of the one depend upon the will of the other. In the same category stand the phenomena of spiritualism. Whatever view we may take of the reality of the claims to spiritual manifestations, this at least would appear to be true, that the life of the medium is invaded by some external personality, whether this external personality be that of an embodied or disembodied spirit.

One of the strangest, we might even say the most inexplicable exhibitions of this hidden interlacing of life with its surroundings, is found in that foreshadowing which is sometimes felt of the future. This yields itself to our comprehension far less than the other phenomena to which I have referred, because it appears to regard the future as already existing, at least as fixed. Perhaps we may find an example of this in the history of our martyred president, Abraham Lincoln. In Lamon's "Life of Lincoln," a book which with all its faults is one of

almost unparalleled interest, showing as it does, in all its details, the growth of one of the noblest, purest, and strongest natures of which we have record, out of circumstances which would seem to render such a development impossible, — in this marvellous story of a true life, we are told that for years Lincoln was haunted by an impression that he was set apart for the execution of some great work, and that he should fall in the accomplishment of it. This impression cast a shadow over his life which he could not shake off. Of course this impression may have been the result of his ambition united with his temperament. But when we consider on the one side the morbid and somewhat abnormal elements of his nature, and, on the other, the exceptional work to which he was summoned and the no less exceptional end which was to befall it, it does not seem strange that this nature should have felt some foregleams of the glory and some foreshadowings of the gloom. When I think of this strong and patient, this tender and heroic soul, pressing on its serene course, unsoiled by pollution, never misled by the sophistries of legal chicanery or political corruption, never led a step beyond the

true path by its mighty ambition, never sinking beneath its burdens, never shrinking from peril, seeing ever before it vaguely in the darkness alike the glory and the terror, it seems to me one of the sublimest figures of history.

Of course I know that the whole class of facts to which I have referred are denied by some; of course, too, any individual case may be doubtful; yet I believe that this class of phenomena is accepted by the unprejudiced among thinking men, by those who do not let theory exclude fact.

The class of facts to which I have referred stand in a somewhat superficial relation to our theme, to which, however, they may well serve to introduce us. I have tarried among these outlying facts so long, because there are some to whom an introduction to the theme, the being brought into its sphere, so as to feel the reality and the power of it, is more difficult and important than the elaboration of it.

Deeper than that class of facts to which I have alluded, lies the sense of sympathy with the lives and actions of others, however far we may be from the ability to reproduce them. This relation Emerson has

happily expressed in the opening paragraph of his essay on history. Though the words are fortunately familiar, they are so apt to our present needs that I will quote them: "There is one mind, common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet to the same and to all of the same. He that is once admitted to the right of reason is made a freeman of the whole estate. What Plato has thought he may think; what a saint has felt, he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man, he can understand. Who hath access to this universal mind is a party to all that is or can be done, for this is the only and sovereign agent."

Somewhat similar to this is the sympathy that we feel with nature. The sense of beauty is at heart a sense of companionship. We recognize in the nature about us a life which is kindred to our own. We rejoice to be wrapped in by this infinite life of nature. The early peoples have loved to speak of the earth as their mother. From this feeling of relationship comes the sympathy which we have with the outward world. Sometimes nature reflects our mood. She is glad or sorrowful according as we are



glad or sorrowful. Sometimes she takes us up into her lofty moods. Our spirits grow strong with her strength, tender with her tenderness, calm with her calmness. Whatever form the effect may take it springs from our sense of unity with the life about us.

Still deeper lies the metaphysical and religious sense of the unity of all being. This is the principle that our modern science fancies it has discovered while really it is the principle upon which science itself rests, and of which the scientific formulas in regard to the uniformity of law form only a partial expression. It is a principle that the thought of man has always taken for granted, and which finds its complete expression alike in Greece and India, countries the types and habits of whose thought are so largely antithetical to one another. Philosophy takes it for granted. The religious element is not essential to it. Schopenhauer is as thorough a mystic as Madame Guyon. Indeed, some of the fairest thoughts of Madame Guyon have been transplanted by Schopenhauer to the uncongenial soil of his system, where amid the darkness and the chill they seem scarcely



less at home than beneath the warm and sunny heavens that before smiled about them. It is indeed difficult to draw the exact line where metaphysical passes into religious mysticism. Men may differ, for instance, as to the side of the line on which Spinoza stands, or even in regard to the location of much Hindoo thought, — may doubt as to whether it shall be called metaphysical or religious. It is, however, in the sphere of religion that mysticism reaches its fairest growth. The oriental religions have given themselves up most thoroughly to this principle. Indeed, it is this that characterizes the central period in the history of the Brahmins, while it is powerfully manifested both in the earlier and later periods of this history. It finds its perfect expression in this Hindoo prayer: "Thou art the sacrifice, the prayer of oblation; the sovereign of all creatures; Thou art all that is to be known or to be unknown; O universal soul, the whole world consists of thee." Among the Sufis, whose type of religion is a reaction against the hard superficialness of Mohammedanism, mysticism has found its most picturesque and poetical expression. They tell us, for

instance, that a saint knocked at the door of Paradise. Who is there? asked the Lord. It is I, answered the saint. But the gate remained fast closed against him. Again he drew near and knocked, and when the Lord asked, as before, Who is there? the saint, grown wiser, answered, Lord, it is Thou; and the gates of Paradise flew open to grant him prompt admittance.

But though this principle is associated in our minds rather with the religions that I have named than with Christianity, yet in Christianity it is no less truly present. In Him we live, and move, and have our being, cried the clear-headed, active Paul, no less a mystic than the contemplative John. All through the Christian history have arisen souls as purely mystical in feeling and in thought as any to be found under warmer skies. Their type of religion was exceptional in Christianity only in its degree. The pious Fénelon could justify his mystical piety by unanswerable arguments drawn from the church fathers. Indeed, no religion that has any soul to it can avoid the touch of mysticism. It is the very life of religion. Men may talk of an external creation, may shut up each soul to a sharp

and separate individuality, may set off the infinite over against the finite, forgetting that thereby they have two finites and no infinite. But then comes the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, which is that of the very indwelling of God in the soul, and all these finely drawn lines disappear, the hard distinctions become fluid ; men become part-takers of the divine life, and God is all and in all. Our tenderest hymns are full of a beautiful mysticism. Thus we sing with Furness, — in what I am sometimes tempted to call the sweetest of hymns, —

“ What is it ? and whither, whence,  
This unsleeping, secret sense,  
Longing for its rest and food  
In some hidden, unknown good ?

“ ’T is the soul — mysterious name ;  
Him it seeks from whom it came :  
While I muse I feel the fire  
Burning on and mounting higher.

“ Onward, upward to thy throne,  
O thou Infinite, Unknown !  
Still it presseth, till it see  
Thee in all, and all in Thee.”

Mysticism is Protean in its shapes. It possesses the key to all forms and all creeds.

The smallest cell opens into God's infinitude. The harshest dogmas assume a tenderness, the most varied rites a meaning for it. The mystic can take the sacred wafer on his lips finding in it the real presence of God, for is not God in all things? He can affirm the absolute divinity of Christ, for is not all life divine, the highest and fullest the most divine? He can affirm the dogma of the Trinity, for does not this furnish the formula that includes all the deep and vast relations of the universe? On the other hand, the mystic, for like reasons, may disown all forms and cast off all creeds. Out of such mysticism, pure and tender, sprang the sect of the Friends. He may justify to himself at least the most extreme and solitary individualism; for am not I, the soul may ask, one of the manifestations of the eternal mind? If I have access to the eternal mind what do I need of other help and guidance?

Not only does mysticism thus hold in solution the forms of religion; it brings to the mysteries of religion a solution, so far as any solution is possible. At least it absorbs all other mysteries into itself.

Nothing has taxed the thought of men

more than the relation between God's sovereignty and man's free will. If man is free how is it possible that the will of God should be absolute in the moral no less than in the physical world? But if the life of man is born out of the life of God, if so far as man truly lives he lives in God and God lives in him, then when man comes to himself, when he lives his true life, his will is one with the will of God. The will of God does not act upon him from without, subduing him by external force. It acts from within. It is indeed his own truest life.

Sin is the blackest mystery of the universe. We cannot understand how it should have a place in the universe of God. Mysticism teaches us that there is but one life, and that is the divine life. Sin is the absence of this life. It thus is death. If we should mark the presence of this life by light, the perfect man would be wholly luminous, showing that every part is living; the worst man would be seen to have only a few intermittent sparks of brightness at the heart of his being. Sin is nothing but the absence of life, and that is the absence of everything. With all its parade of pride and pomp, sin is thus seen in its nothing-

ness. The leaf, as we have seen, has its life only in the tree. When in the autumn it begins to loosen its hold upon the tree, it puts on the greatest appearance of glory. Its gold and its purple fill the earth with splendor. We rejoice in the beauty, but we rejoice with a sense of sadness in our hearts, for we know that what we see is the pomp and glory of death. Such is the splendor that springs from the pride and selfishness of the world. The true man may, in his humility, confront them with calm confidence. They also spring from the separation of the individual from the universal life. They also are the flaunting glories of death.

So also does mysticism help to answer the great question as to the possibility of knowing anything of God. Some thinkers, as we have seen, love to resolve the thought of God into that of an unknown force. But if this power lives in us, if it thinks in us, how shall we not have some revelation of it in ourselves? Indeed why should we not know more of it than of anything besides? If in religion, then, we find the darkest mystery, in it we find also the clearest light. We may doubt wholly in regard to

the nature and even the reality of the things which we see merely from the outside ; but of that life that lives in us, that is the life of our life, how can we wholly doubt ?

Thus does mysticism have the central, the supreme place in the religious thought and life ; but owing to this very supremacy it is beset with perils. From this source of life and strength and knowledge may spring the blackest errors, the most fantastic delusions.

The fundamental errors which have too often marred the beauty of mysticism, and which have made the very word so often a reproach, are, in the first place, the belief, natural enough in theory, that if the true life be life in God, then to reach this true life in its fulness the individual life must be given up. The life must flow backward and downward to become one with its source. Thus in all nations men have sought to find God by giving up all relation with the world, by shutting up the avenues of sense, by giving up feeling and thought. Thus the Hindoo mystic sits with his eyes fixed upon a single point, with measured or suspended breath, so far as possible with no emotion in his heart and

no thought in his brain, seeking thus, by entering into perfect inanity, to become one with God. Christian mystics have resorted to like measures, and marked out all the steps that lead to the state which is at once the absence and the fulness of life. They have not seen that this fulness which they seek is emptiness. The being they would share is the negation of being. By this process they do not become God, they become nothing. It is as if the bud, knowing that its life is in the life of the parent tree, should seek to become one with the tree by withering and shrinking, and letting its life ebb back into the common life. Seeing it, we should not say, Behold how this bud has become one with the tree; we should say, The bud is dead.

Errors, in the second place, somewhat different from the one I have named, grow out of a less extreme application of the same theory. Instead of giving up the life of thought and feeling, the mystic gives up the control of thought and feeling. Whatever comes to him, apparently, from the depths of his own consciousness, he takes it for granted comes from God. The exercise of reason, of thought, reference to the



results of other minds, would mar the freedom of the revelation of God. The favorite motto of the mystic, which may be applied to both forms that I have named, is this: When man sleeps, God wakes. He considers himself one of the beloved of God to whom he giveth in their sleep. But when men sleep, answers Hegel, they dream. Hence in the writings of so many mystics we have by the side of thoughts whose depth and beauty thrill us with an inspiration of fresh life, conceits the most fantastic and absurd, multiplied till the reading becomes a weariness and a disgust. Such men think that by this falling back into the heart of things they can understand all the phenomena of time and eternity; some even have believed that their life could thus become so blended with the common life that they could control the course of things by a word. Thus we have growing out of a grand and fundamental truth all the extravagances of Theosophy and Theurgy. In a more superficial and modern view we have abnormal states of the nervous system, or of the bodily life, prized more highly than the normal. The state of the mesmeric or other trance is considered by

some higher than the state of consciousness. Such do not realize that this is a falling back and down, a losing of the real individual life in the indistinguishable mass of being. The individual ceases to be a person and becomes a thing acted upon by wills and forces outside of itself. I do not say that such a process may not, like that of sleep, be sometimes useful. It may bring to light facts in our nature otherwise unknowable. Like sleep, however, it is not an exaltation, but a lowering of the nature.

If the life of man is born out of the life of God, if the divine life is to flow into and fill out the human life, then the channels for its entrance are those which God himself has created ; and the most normal life is the life which is most filled with his presence. Very refreshing after the distorted theories which we have been considering sounds the cry of John, "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him ;" and that of Paul, "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith." This is the true mysticism. It is the true identification of the human with the divine. The bud is most full of the life of the tree when it swells

and bursts into the leaf or the flower. So man is most full of the life of God when his natural powers are most fully developed. Not when he sleeps but when he is most awake can he best see God. The form of mysticism we first considered cries that God is; it does not say what he is. It gives us the copula without the predicate. The soul gives up also its predicates and sinks back into empty abstraction to find him. The true mysticism adds the predicate. It tells what God is. God is love, and he that would live in God must not fall back but press forward. He will find Him, not in emptiness but in fulness. The life of God visits the soul as the life of nature pours itself into the tree, not to bring into it anything strange, but to fill out that which is natural to it. The fruit of the spirit is love, and joy, and peace, the simple, natural flowering and fruitage of the soul.

I and my Father are one, said Jesus; he also said: My Father worketh hitherto, and I work, making thus his union with the Father to consist, not in passivity, but in activity. Christianity, thus, while preserving the great truth of mysticism, disentangles it from the perversions which have too often

corrupted it, and makes of it the incentive to the noblest and fullest life.

Thus mysticism, rightly understood, would increase our confidence in human nature rather than destroy it. It would increase our confidence in human thought. It would teach us that this is akin to the creative thought of God. He that should stop thinking in order to find the truth, would be like one who should close his eyes that he might see.

But thought alone is partial and superficial. There are depths in the nature of man which thought alone can bring to light, but which thought has only just begun to sound. There are forces in human nature which thought must accept as given. There are spiritual growths of which thought cannot lay bare the roots. Certain habits and instincts spring out of experience. The roots lie near the surface, and thought can uncover them and show their place and nature. There are others that are not thus rooted in any superficial experience. As we trace them they stretch down through the drift and débris of our past lives. They are rooted only in the absolute life. They are offshoots from the life of God.

Of this nature pre-eminently is the moral sense. I will dwell at some little length upon the aspect of our theme, on account of its practical importance; and also that our theme itself may be seen to be not merely a matter of dreamy speculation, but bound up in the most momentous issues of our times. Kant was right in making the moral sense pre-eminently the medium by which the reality of the divine being is manifested to us. He was wrong and inconsequent in denying validity to the other fundamental elements of our nature; but the moral sense, the practical reason, is so much more authoritative, so much more clear and final in its utterances than the rest, it brings us so into the presence of the awfulness and sublimity, as well as of the beauty of the divine holiness, that we can forgive him that the sense of it obscured everything beside.

Especially can we forgive him in the days in which we live, in which the grandeur and authority of morality are to such an extent lost sight of. I think we do not enough realize the terrible pressure against which morality has to contend at this time. We need not delay to speak much of external causes of this pressure, though these are

very powerful. The war, in spite of its high purpose, left the legacy that all wars leave,—a tendency to demoralization and brutality. Much of the most popular and plausible thought of the age tends in the same direction. I will not here discuss nor question the truth of the theory that human life is a development out of animal life. Least of all will I join in the outcry against it. It is a theory which is compatible with the highest faith ; which may, indeed, introduce a new element of beauty and hopefulness into our faith. But however readily we may accept the theory, however clearly we may see the high applications of it, it is no less obvious that in the world at large the first impression of it, the superficial judgment in regard to it, would result in a lowering of the dignity of human nature. If it is accepted as truth by the scientific world its tendency will in time be seen to be no more anti-spiritual than that of the fact that we have bodies ; but it will be long before the popular mind will recover from the shock of it. Its tendency will be to put a burden upon many an upward struggling soul, and to sink deeper many a depraved one. It will seem to

degrade human nature, to justify its brutalization.

This crisis is one that cannot and could not be avoided; but the crisis is rendered more perilous to appearance from the fact that the same process of thought which brings man physically nearer to the brute seeks to separate him spiritually from the divine. While opening a gulf below, it seeks to unclasp his hold upon the support above. This is especially seen in the manner in which this thought makes light of, or seeks to take away the authority of the moral sense. Bain, one of the foremost English writers on psychology and morality, refers to the old motto, *Fiat justitia ruat coelum*, Let justice be done though the heavens should fall, only to stigmatize it as the climax of sentimentalism. It is indeed a motto which utilitarianism can have little place for. It shows that to whatever extent utilitarianism may be the guide of morality, there comes at last a point where the two part company. It is a motto which can be used fanatically and foolishly; but yet it is a motto that has sustained and inspired many a noble soul. The sentiment it expresses has, in one and another form, done more to



purify the moral atmosphere, to keep human life strong and healthy, and society sweet and clean, than all the treatises on morality that could be piled together. How many a man has it sustained in the performance of an act of justice which would make of his fortunes a mere wreck. The act has been done; his little heaven has fallen; his little world has collapsed. He has found indeed a heaven within. The sense of justice done has brought its own satisfaction to his soul; but if justice has no inner authority, no inner life, the inner heaven would have fallen with the outer. When John Stuart Mill exclaimed that he would go to hell rather than call that just in God which would be unjust in man, what was that but a new application of the old cry, Let justice be done though heaven should fall? Acting upon this principle the whole human race, the whole community of finite spirits, would leave heaven empty rather than countenance injustice though it might be called divine. If we dismiss the heroic motto with a sneer, we shall find that not only our sentimentalism, but that the strength of our manhood, has gone with it.

Bain is not the only writer whose theoriz-



ing tends in the same direction. Herbert Spencer seeks to solve the question why men have attached special sanctity to the dictates of morality, and he gives as reasons, in effect, the selfish maxims of society and the mistaken assumptions of theology, repeated so often through countless generations as to produce a permanent effect on human nature. I do not forget that he elsewhere indicates a system of morality which is not without inspiration. I here consider the explanation which he gives of the authority of morality itself. Now any man who should accept this explanation as all-sufficient, and who should find in his own nature no moral principle that this could not account for, would, I believe, hold himself free from any responsibility to the moral principle. Schopenhauer approached the theme in the same manner that Spencer does. He states, distinctly, that he has not to ask why men should obey the moral law, but why they do obey it. Schopenhauer was an atheist and a pessimist; but at the same time he was a philosopher and a mystic, and because he was a mystic, his explanation of the moral sense is such that if you and I accepted it, even though we could

find within ourselves no moral instinct which this could not account for, the principle of morality would be stronger within us than it was before; because we should see its real nature more clearly than we did before.

Darwin also attempts the explanation of the moral sense with morality left out. He explains the power of conscience by the simple fact of the prominence of the social instincts and the comparative transiency of the selfish impulses. No authority is given to morality except the greater prominence of the instincts on which it is based. But the truth is that the regal dignity of the moral law is never more strongly felt than when it confronts the selfish impulses. Even when it suffers violence at their hands, it yet receives their homage. With the king in Hamlet ambition was as permanent as the sense of justice. Indeed it was only now and then that the voice of justice made itself heard in his heart. That wonderful soliloquy of his shows us the collision between the two principles. It shows us the king yielding to his selfish ambition, but, while doing this, feeling himself ashamed in the presence of the divinity of justice. Shak-

speare knew less than Darwin does about plants and animals, but he knew infinitely more about human nature ; and this single passage, the single picture of this —

Limed soul, that struggling to be free  
Was more engaged,

refutes by the simplicity of truth the flimsy reasoning of the naturalist.

There is a story, happily familiar, that Theodore Parker, when a boy, took up a stone to throw at a tortoise in a pond ; but something within him seemed to forbid the act. He went home and asked his mother what this something was. Suppose she had given him any of the definitions to which I have just referred. Suppose she had told him, for instance, that it was the inherited effects of the maxims of a self-interested society and the assumptions of presumptuous theologians. It was a turning point in Parker's life. I think that if his mother had told him this, and he had thoroughly believed her, the next tortoise that he saw would have been in peril. What his mother really did tell him was this : That the something that bade him hold his hand was what men commonly called conscience ; but she

preferred to call it the voice of God within him. Parker himself tells us the power of these words. His true life seemed to date from them. The voice of conscience, instead of being silenced by sophistry, was recognized and listened to as the voice of God. His conscience thus nurtured became the conscience of the land.

I have dwelt upon this matter that we might realize the odds against which the moral principle has to contend amid the superficial teaching of the time. Such teaching is not shut up within books of science that are sealed to the common thought. Such theories spread more rapidly than the books which contain them, and their effects extend more rapidly than they.

I make here no complaint against the science of the day. It is doing its work bravely and well. I reverence the devotion of its students and rejoice in their success. But physical science has to do with only one side of facts. There is another side which is recognized by religion. Religion and science are like two oarsmen on opposite sides of one boat. Science is pulling with all its strength. It does not do for religion to drop its oar that it may wave

# IMMORTALITY

AND OTHER ESSAYS



applause to its comrade. Still less does it do for it to wring its hands and cry with terror that the strokes of science are swinging the boat's head out of its course, that it will be dashed against the rocks or swept far out into the open sea. Rather let religion do what science is doing. Let it also bend itself to the oar. While it rejoices in the strength of its comrade's stroke, let it make its stroke as strong, and the boat will shoot along in its course with a speed that it has never reached before.

In other words, religion should emphasize the spiritual facts of life, just as science emphasizes the physical facts of life. While science shows the relation of man to the brute, religion should show his relationship with God. This is to be done, not by fulminations and anathemas, not by ecclesiasticisms and external authority; but by making men feel the power of God within them; by bringing into consciousness what I have called the mystical element of life.

Mysticism and physical science recognize the opposite poles of being. We need not wait, then, for physical science to come to its

aid. Physical science has to do with points, with atoms; mysticism has to do with wholes. The results of mysticism, physical science calls unthinkable; but they are the staple of our thoughts. Physical science boasts of the clearness of her results; but these results, without the aid of mysticism, are unthinkable. Physical science can see in each man only a congeries of atoms mingled in a mazy dance. Can you think of yourself as simply a figure in the dance of atoms? Can you think of the friend you love the most as such a whirl of atoms, a whirl closer and more intricate than that of the sand-column that sweeps across the desert, the material more pliant, but the nature of the two being otherwise alike? The only element of thought from which we never can escape is personality. If physical science fails to give us this we see that it needs its complement, if only that its own results may be thinkable. The recognition of personality, of the unity in the midst of the variety of physical elements, is the beginning of mysticism; its culmination is the recognition of a like unity amid all the variety of the universe, the infinite personality, of which we are a part, but which yet



is distinct from us and from which we are distinct; from which and in which is our only life; to which we must return, not by the mere absorption of being, but by the higher absorption of a joyful love.



JOSEPH PRIESTLEY



## JOSEPH PRIESTLEY

### THE OLD UNITARIANISM AND THE NEW

THE memory of Joseph Priestley has received distinguished recognition. At his death, most, if not all, of the learned academies of Europe paid honor to the service that he had rendered in the advancement of science. In Paris, it was Baron Cuvier who pronounced his eulogy. In 1874, on the centennial of his most important discovery, a statue was raised to his memory in Birmingham, the city from which in his lifetime he had been driven by a mob. At the unveiling of this monument, Professor Huxley pronounced the oration. In all these cases, Priestley was honored simply as a man of science. Baron Cuvier, indeed, spoke with a certain horror of the boldness of his theological speculations. Professor Huxley properly recognized the fact that, in the commemoration in which he bore a part, the theological work of Priestley had no place. He did, however, refer in noble words to one aspect

of his position in the religious world. "His statue," he said, "will do as good service as the brazen image that was set upon a pole before the Israelites, if those who have been bitten by the fiery serpents of sectarian hatred, which still haunt this wilderness of a world, are made whole by looking upon the image of a heretic who was yet saint."

While the interest which Priestley took in scientific investigation was great, and while he pursued the path of discovery with hearty enthusiasm, yet his best love was given to religion. He valued, as he tells us, his success in the field of science chiefly because it won for him a wider hearing as a Christian teacher. Here, to-day, so far as I am aware, for the first time, the memory of Priestley is honored in a way which recognizes the various activities of his life as he estimated them, which sees his life in the perspective according to which he viewed it. We honor him as one who helped to prepare the way for the new science. We honor him as one who worked for human freedom and rejoiced in every indication of the coming of a larger life for man. But we honor him to-day, chiefly, as one of the founders of modern Unitarianism in England and in

this country and city. I do not know that his modest spirit would not have shrunk from the thought of any commemoration by statue and eulogy ; but, if he would accept any such tribute to his memory, I am sure that what we offer to it here to-day would be the most precious to him.

The story of Priestley's life has been so recently and so well told in this place that I have no excuse for dwelling on the attractive theme. I should, however, be false to the occasion if I did not say a few words in regard to his character and his work.

The mind of Priestley was active, sincere, and transparent. As a worker, he was indefatigable. He was happy in the time when he lived. It was a time when men were just beginning to feel the special intellectual life which has marked these later years. The intellectual field was, however, as yet so narrow that one mind could be familiar with it all. It was a time when Goethe could be the first poet and the first man of letters of the world, and could at the same time make positive contributions to science. Thus it was that Priestley could do important and original work in various lines of thought. In science, in political economy, in history,

in exegesis, in theology, he made his power felt. Dr. Martineau has said that a list of his works reads like the prospectus of an encyclopædia. Every circumstance of his life set his active brain to some new task. If he was teaching, forthwith treatises on grammar and plans of history flowed from his pen. If he lived by the side of a brewery, he was roused to the investigation of gases. An acquaintance with Franklin moved him to undertake a history of the discoveries in electricity which threatened to expand into a history of all science.

The world about him was as fresh as his eager intellect. Investigation in any serious sense seemed just beginning. Now, when for so many years the microscope, the retort, the telescope, the prism, and, most characteristic of all, the balance, have been steadily and systematically applied to every portion of our environment, the work of the scientist is very different. Now one who is to be a discoverer must take his specialty. He must carefully study, so far as he can, the minute work of his predecessors in some special line of research. Only when all this has been accomplished can he, for the most part, hope to attain original results. In California, in



the earlier days, gold, we are told, could be had for the stooping. Now what apparatus and what systematic toil are needed, if the precious metal is to be secured! So far as the riches of science are concerned, Priestley lived, we might almost say, at the time when gold was to be had for the stooping. This, however, must not be taken too literally. I suppose as much mental power was needed to be an original worker then as now, only there was needed less training and less equipment. Thus one could pass from one department to another in the intellectual world, and do original work in each.

Priestley used to the full the opportunities which this condition of the intellectual world gave him. His literary work was simply immense. At one time, at the height of his unpopularity, at a gathering of clergymen, one exclaimed that he should like to see Priestley mounted on a pile of his own works, and that he would gladly set fire to the whole. The grotesque humor of the idea takes something from its brutality, though Priestley, in whom the sense of humor would seem to have been only slightly, if at all, developed, saw only the grimness of the jest. There are few men

whose works are sufficiently numerous to suggest the idea that they would serve for the funeral pile of their author. What was published would seem to have been only a small part of what was written. At the time of the destruction of Priestley's house, it is said that the mob waded knee-deep in the fragments of torn manuscript.

In all his work, Priestley was actuated by the simplest love of truth. It never occurred to him to conceal any conviction that he had. He seemed to like to put his views in the most offensive form, though probably he did this simply because it was the most natural way of utterance. He boldly proclaimed himself a materialist and a necessarian, though, so far at least as one of these terms is concerned, a less objectionable word would have defined his position just as well.

When he came to America, his sense of loyalty to the country in which, as he once said, he had found "neither protection nor redress," was so great that he would not become naturalized. He remained what was known as "an alien," and, in the excited state of feeling of the time, was exposed to some suspicion and hostility on

that account. But, though he made many enemies, he made many friends also. Indeed, the devotion of his friends is the strongest testimony to the nobility of his character. During his whole career, money was collected, without any impulse from him, to enable him to bear the expense of his experiments. Toplady, whose hymns have shown what tender warmth could glow in the heart of the sternest theology, in a letter to him, filled for the most part with sharp argumentation, exclaims: "Give me the person whom I can hold up, as I can a piece of crystal, and see through him. For this, among many other excellences, I regard and admire Dr. Priestley." And Franklin, writing to Priestley in reference to one of his triumphs, exclaimed that he enjoyed his friend's fame as his own.

As the outcome of his multifarious labors, Priestley is at present known chiefly in two most widely different capacities, — as one who helped to prepare the way for the new chemistry, and as one who was largely instrumental in the establishment of Unitarianism in England and America. These two services which he rendered to our modern world, it would seem, should bring him very

near to us. In spirit, they do ; but, as we read his works, even in regard to these two great offices, it is astonishing how far away he often seems. We realize how the intellectual world has changed in this brief period.

In chemistry, the work of Lavoisier may represent the barrier that separates him from us. He ventured to deny the existence of phlogiston, — that Mrs. Harris of chemistry, — for which he was burned in effigy at Berlin. He also laid the foundation of a system of chemical terminology, so that henceforth the science spoke a new and precise language.

In theology, among many influences that might be named which make the old thought so foreign to the new, perhaps that of Coleridge may be considered as among the most important. The work of Coleridge in theology was precisely the opposite of that which Lavoisier performed in chemistry. Lavoisier adopted a nomenclature clear, sharp, and precise. Every term told its definite story. The influence of Coleridge was to break up the sharpness of theological terminology. With him came a certain philosophical mysticism, by which

the sharp antagonisms of thought and speech were somewhat solved; and there entered into theology a somewhat freer, less dogmatic, and more sympathetic spirit. However this may be, whatever may have been the factors or the instruments of the change, it is certain that the theological utterances of these early Unitarians have a somewhat far-away sound to us. It may be well, then, on this occasion, to consider the work which these early Unitarians accomplished, and to ask how their position differed from the Unitarianism of to-day.

The early Unitarian movement was very largely within the Presbyterian Church. The English Presbyterians had been growing more and more liberal, until at last, before they fairly knew to what they had been tending, they found themselves to have become Unitarian, and were ready to accept the name. The two men who contributed most to bring about this definite result were, however, connected with other bodies of Christians. Lindsey was a clergyman of the Church of England. Slowly and sadly he brought himself to face the necessity of a change of position and of church allegiance. He felt himself very solitary;

for, though there were enough who agreed with him, so far as his rejection of the articles of faith was concerned, he found himself almost alone in his sense of obligation to leave a church, the creed of which he no longer believed, and the prayers of which he could no longer conscientiously repeat.

Priestley had been brought up as an Independent, and had begun his life in full acceptance of the orthodox belief.

The movement in which he bore a part was largely intellectual rather than emotional. Dogmas were rejected, to a great extent, because they were not, as these searchers judged, taught in the Bible, rather than on account of any protest of the heart. Priestley, indeed, gave up the notion of any responsibility for Adam's sin on account of its unreasonableness. Earlier he had felt himself to have sinned past forgiveness, possibly in part because he found himself unable to repent of the sin of Adam. He commenced, however, in perfect good faith, to study the doctrine of the Atonement as taught in the New Testament. To his great surprise, he found that the orthodox dogma was not there. Belsham, being a teacher, brought together the texts that

taught the doctrine of the Trinity. He did this in order to strengthen the faith of his pupils. To his surprise, the process weakened his own. Every year as he went over the ground, it seemed weaker to him, until at last his faith in the doctrine was wholly gone. So far, then, from starting, as is sometimes supposed, with lax views of Scripture, and reaching heretical views through an unrestrained use of human reason, they were driven to their heresies very largely by the authority of Scripture. Doubts as to the infallibility of the Bible came, for the most part, after its judgment had been rendered for the views called heretical. Though the motives for the change of faith were thus at first largely intellectual, the change itself brought great peace and joy to the hearts of these reformers. Let us see in what way the relief and the satisfaction were accomplished.

The belief of these Unitarians can be very simply told. It was faith in God as the Father and in Christ as the Revealer. In fact, these two articles were in essence one. They believed in God as the Father, because Christ had so revealed him. Before the simplicity of this faith, the intricacies



of the doctrine of the Trinity, the artificialness of the doctrine of the Atonement, the gloom which rested over man's eternal destiny, passed suddenly away. Doctrinal subtleties, theatrical effects, technical schemes, gave place to a simple, childlike faith in the loving Father of all.

Dr. Channing, in one of the most eloquent of his sermons, pointed out the distracting effect which the doctrine of the Trinity must have upon the religious faith. Are there three gods to whom we must give our worship, or is there one only? Indeed, the doctrine in its actual development has swung between these two extremes. I doubt if it is possible for any mind, at any single moment, to hit the precise mean in which Unity and Trinity are seen, each in its due relation to the other, simply because such due relation is itself impossible. Professor Shedd, who in these days reproduces the older thought of the Church with a clearness and richness of statement such as we could hardly find elsewhere, insists that the members of the Trinity have separate experiences and separate consciousnesses, and that the consciousness of the Trinity itself is thus a collective consciousness. It



is hard, practically, to see in such a relation anything more or less than three gods acting in perfect harmony.

After all, however, the difficulties concerning the doctrine of the Trinity are chiefly intellectual. If one accepts it or if one denies it, the Christian life is not much affected. Even an open tritheism or polytheism might be held religiously. It is the doctrines that have been associated with that of the Trinity that have weighed upon men's hearts. It was the relief from these that filled the souls of these reformers with joy. It was as if black and heavy clouds had rolled away, and the blue heavens stretched above them, and the clear sunshine gladdened their hearts. God was no longer the stern judge, demanding the death of the innocent before he could forgive the guilty, if that can be called forgiveness which has been purchased at such a price. Christ was no longer the substituted victim of the Father's wrath. Man was no longer under the curse of God. These men saw only the love of God reflected in the face of Jesus. Man was the child of God, still followed and ever to be followed by the Father's love.

Rarely has piety been manifested under a more attractive form than that which it assumed in the lives of these early Unitarians. It was simple and manly. It was without cant and technicality. It was free from anything that was morbid. It was as natural as the trust which we place in the laws of nature. Even what may seem to us erroneous in the thought of Priestley contributed its part to the pure and steady light of this simple faith. His belief in necessity was simply an intense form of faith in God. Since everything was determined by God, what place is there for grief or anxiety? It was a marvel to his child-like mind that Calvinism, starting as it does from the thought of the sovereignty of God, could reach results so terrible. The sovereignty of God meant to him the sovereignty of a wise goodness. He believed that Calvinism thus carried at its heart a principle that would one day transform it into a system of beauty. On the last day of his life, he expressed his faith that the lives of all men would be guided to the best issues. "We shall all meet finally," he said. "We only require different degrees of discipline, suited to prepare us for final happiness."

The last evening of his life, when bidding good-night to a little grandchild, he said, "I am going to sleep as well as you ; for death is only a good, long, sound sleep in the grave, and we shall meet again." Such was the simple, childlike faith of these reformers.

Of course, these results were bought at a price. Such a system as that which they opposed could not pass away without carrying with it much that had proved helpful and precious to the souls of men. For generations, for centuries, in the special forms of faith which these men opposed, sweet and noble spirits had found rest and inspiration. They must have been fitted to quicken and satisfy the religious nature. These forms of faith, we must admit, had elements of helpfulness which the new faith, with all its beauty, did not possess, and for which it had no direct substitute.

To look at the matter from without, there was a picturesqueness in the older faith that was lacking in the new. I have said, in speaking of the change, that it was as if dark and heavy clouds had been rolled away. There is often a picturesqueness in the cloud. How magnificent is the thunder-

cloud, black and beetling or bronzed, it may be, with a lurid light! How magnificent the flash of the lightning, even though we shrink and grow pale before it! How magnificent the crash of the thunder, though it seems to be uttering the doom of the world! One might, it would seem, sometimes tire of an unclouded heaven, and long for the refreshment of a spectacle like this. Then in the older faith there was a certain dramatic, even a tragic, interest. History had a plot. There was the beauty of the early paradise where our first parents lived without care or sin, when the world brought what was the fairest and laid it at their feet, and in the garden, in the cool of the evening, God himself walked. Then there was the fall. Then came the centuries of sin, brightened only now and then by a prophetic light, that grew clearer as time went on, until at last he that had been prophesied and waited for so long appeared. What scene could be conceived in which should centre such stupendous magnificence, such absorbing interest, as that on Calvary? Here God bore the penalty of human sin. Here was the great sacrifice by which the divine wrath was turned aside from the

chosen ones. Here the storm-cloud that had hung over the world so long at last burst. The bolt struck ; but man escaped. It struck this willing victim of the wrath of God.

All this was in the past ; but in the future was to come a scene yet more august and terrible. It was that of the final judgment. This willing victim was to appear as the world's judge, — a judge more awful because of the love which he had shown the world. All peoples were to be gathered before him. The wicked were to depart to their endless doom ; and the righteous were to enter into endless blessedness.

It is idle to underrate the power of a faith that could offer such interest as this. The lives of most are commonplace. We love to be thrilled even by the interest of the mimic stage ; and what is all that the genius and the art of man could offer compared with this spectacle in which God and the devils and the whole race of man had part ?

If to some this was a mere spectacle which awed and exalted, to those who gave themselves to the full power of this faith it was a drama in which they themselves had part. Men love not only the pictur-

esque, they love excitement also. There is a fascination in a game that is played for some tremendous stake. What a stake was this for which these men were playing! The stake for each was his own soul. An endless heaven was on the one side, an endless hell on the other. There was in every case, for a time at least, the element of uncertainty. Who could tell, until at last the full, sweet assurance came, whether he was or was not of the elect? A young preacher once told me that, if he did not believe in the eternity of the punishment of the unrepentant, he should not think it worth his while to preach. After the excitement of the game for such high stakes, anything less stimulating seemed to him insipid and commonplace. Even to-day we find leaders in the Church doubting whether men can be trusted to be sent as missionaries to the heathen, who do not believe that the unconverted heathen are lost forever.

More important than all this was the rapture which the soul that recognized itself as living in such relations sometimes felt. After the dread and the terror came the joy. You are at a house, let us suppose,

in which the son and the brother is exposed to some great peril. He is accused of some capital crime. The trial is progressing. You find the family in the depth of anxiety and grief. Suddenly he appears upon the scene. The trial is ended. He has been acquitted with honor. With what rapture he is received ! With what tumultuous joy is the dwelling filled ! You return to your own pleasant home, where you receive a glad but quiet greeting. What is this compared with the exaltation which you have just beheld !

In this indication of the elements of popular power possessed by the faith which these Unitarians opposed, I have presented these elements as they appear when they reach their fullest and most definite results. I wish to contrast the quietness of the Unitarian faith with the more exciting quality which may be assumed by the forms of belief to which it is opposed. In the Church of England, it must be admitted that these elements existed in a more quiet state, the more exciting experience to which I have referred being found rather in the dissenting churches. The Established Church recognized, however, those articles of belief

which in the more enthusiastic bodies aroused such struggles in the heart. It had much of the same picturesqueness in its faith, and added to this the picturesqueness of its ancient liturgy and of its magnificent temples.

There was, however, one element of power present in all these churches. The aspects of faith to which I have referred were important as arousing and keeping alive the interest of men. That to which I shall now refer had power to touch the heart. The doctrine of the Incarnation, as it has been held by Christendom, is one of great power and tenderness. The thought that God himself, out of love for man, did really live upon the earth, that he walked our streets and slept beneath our roofs, that he took little children in his arms and blessed them, that he everywhere brought sympathy and consolation and forgiveness, that he died for men; that he, the God-man, now reigns in heaven and still looks upon men with the same sympathetic tenderness as of old, — all this could but touch the heart of men. Professor Shedd tells us distinctly that a God-man is now the middle person of the Trinity. How must this, to those who accept it, make the thought of God a power of comfort and



of strength ! It is not strange that in these days, when the older creed is slowly melting away, like an iceberg in the Southern Seas, while one doctrine after another is losing the sharpness of its outline and fading out, — it is not strange, I say, that to so many this faith in the God-man enthroned in the heavens should be the last to give way ; that, while all else is becoming vague and dim, the face of Jesus, bearing in its glory a touch of the old sadness that tells of suffering and yet more of sympathy, should still be seen to look down upon us from on high. This human sympathy in God, — this God who made himself a man, — this is something that, so far as the human heart is concerned, nothing can quite replace.

I have thus contrasted with the beauty of the Unitarian faith something of the cost at which it was obtained. The cost was real and great. But we must remember that all advance in human life has been paid for by a like sacrifice. More tenderly than the thought of the God-man appeals to the Protestant does the gentle mother of God appeal to the heart of the Catholic. He can pour into her ear what he could not

utter to her Son. What special power over the heart have the images of the Catholic Church! Through them a man can grasp the feet of his Lord and look up into his eyes, and feel that somehow, though it is an image that he clasps, yet his Lord is really there. There is a nearness of approach that under other circumstances is not possible. After visiting a region like the Tyrol, where the popular faith is yet strong, where the shrine and the image meet you at every turn, and everywhere there is recognition of them and devotion, the Protestant faith, at its warmest, seems somewhat chill and bare.

Consider, further, at what a cost Christianity itself was bought. Think of the fair humanities of the elder faith, the grace of nymph and dryad and the bright glory of the gods. What a shadow fell across the scene when the cross was lifted in the midst of the world, and all these forms of loveliness shrank away, chilled from its presence! Go back even before the classic faith. Even Fetichism, in which the various objects of nature about us were themselves divine, had a power, so at least Comte maintained, that no later religion has equalled.

Take, as the type of all, the life of the child. At what cost are the buoyancy of youth and the strength of manhood bought! As we look back upon the hours of childhood, we feel "that there has passed a glory from the earth." With childhood, something was lost that later years cannot restore. Thus are the path of the race and the path of the individual strewn with fallen flowers, which in their full beauty shall never be seen again.

Is it a sad truth that the better must always be purchased by the loss of the good? It is a glad truth, rather. It shows the wealth of life. It shows that at every stage of development there is something worth the having. Should you call that man happy who, as he looked back to his childhood, saw nothing to regret? Should we not say that the loss of this regret was the loss of one of the great charms of life? If the path along which the individual or the race has trodden is strewn with fallen and withered flowers, it shows simply that flowers have grown all along the way.

I bear, then, glad witness to the power which was possessed by the forms of religion against which Unitarianism was a protest.

I pay a glad tribute of recognition to the good which these forms of religion have wrought in the world. Doubtless these early reformers, who had felt within themselves something of this power, felt also something of sadness at the change. Certainly, they felt the loss of sweet companionship. They felt most keenly the suspicion and the hate which they had roused against themselves. But the time had come, so far at least as they were concerned, for a freer and larger faith. They felt the price that they were paying, but they felt also that the gain was worth more than all its cost. They rejoiced to follow their Master without the camp, bearing his reproach. They felt that it was better to stand with him beneath the open heaven, and listen reverently while he spoke to them of his Father and our Father, of his God and our God, than it was to bow before him and worship him as a Divinity. The dreams of our childhood are very sweet; but who of us would go back to his childhood? In spite of the burdens of life, there is a joy in manly freedom and even in manly toil. Religion is something better than picturesqueness. It has a nobler form than that of scenic display. Moments

of ecstasy are not its best gift to man. There is even a tenderness, as there is a terror, that marks an incomplete development of the religious thought. We are summoned to the fulness of the stature of Christ. We are summoned to a large, a free, and a manly faith. These men had reached the thought of a God that the heaven of heavens cannot contain, that could not take form in any one human personality, however holy. In Christ they found a revelation of God, a manifestation of his holiness and love; but the thought of God himself, of the Infinite One, brought to their hearts a peace, a strength, and a gladness that nothing else could bring. The relation of God to the world assumed a grandeur that was more worthy of Him. Schemes of salvation, legal expedients, disappeared, as clouds melt in the summer sky. Their spirits found themselves face to face with the Father. It is as if they had heard the very words of Jesus when he said, "I say not that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you."

They found a power in this faith. I have spoken of the power that there was in the thought of the Incarnation, — the thought

of the God-man upon the earth and of the man-God in the heavens. But, after all, the incarnation that has most moved the hearts of men has been something closer and more real than this. It has been the incarnation of the spirit of Jesus in his followers. It is related, I know not how truly, that, when Père Hyacinthe was in this country, one of our foremost preachers remarked to him, in a conversation, that it was the business of the minister to point his hearers to Christ. "No," answered the Frenchman, "it is his business to be Christ to his people." It is this incarnation, whether it be in Catholic priest or Protestant minister, that has given a large part of its power to Christianity. It is this that has made the story of the incarnation in Jesus credible and real. This incarnation is as possible and has been as truly accomplished by the Unitarian minister as by any other. If it has failed, the fault has been not with his doctrine, but with him.

However much the picturesque and the theatrical may attract men, however much the story of an incarnate God can move them, it is a mistake to think that only under these more or less extravagant forms religion can touch the hearts even of the

humblest. We have in the gospel story itself the proof to the contrary. When Jesus, standing upon the Mount, saw the people gathered about him, and opened his mouth and taught them, he uttered the truth of religion in its simplest form. In what he said there was no hint of Trinity or of a God-man or of "scheme." He told the people simply of God, and of the beauty of the life to which God called them. He pointed them to no less an example than their Father who is in heaven; and, so far as approach to Him was concerned, he told them that the pure in heart should see Him, and that the peacemakers should be called His children. Too simple and bare all this, it might appear, to touch the hearts of men; yet we are told that "the common people heard him gladly." This is the gospel that Unitarianism undertook to preach; and, if the preacher has caught anything of the spirit of his Master, his words will not lack power. Compared with the clear beauty of this Sermon on the Mount, how do the dogmas at which we have glanced, while we recognized their power, seem like feverish dreams. In passing from them to this, we feel that we have awakened from such

dreams to the light of a pure, sweet day. Men may speak of the "pale negations" of Unitarianism, but the child may be called happy the peace of whose loving home is not disturbed by anger or frantic terrors, and one who has a religion of a like peaceful gladness is to be called still happier.

We have thus considered, in the most general way, the relation of the faith of these early Unitarians to that of their contemporaries and predecessors in the church from which they felt compelled to separate. It remains for us to look briefly at the relation in which those who to-day are called Unitarians stand to these fathers of their faith.

We have already noticed a certain remoteness that we find in their utterances. This is doubtless to be explained in part by the change that has taken place in literary habits in general, and especially by the fact that the religious teaching now stoops more to the common facts of life than it was wont to then. But there has been also a change in the thought that is called Unitarian. I have already referred to the necessarianism and the so-called materialism of Priestley. These do much to produce the effect of



which I speak. But, leaving these out of the account, the Unitarianism which these reformers taught was a germ in which were possibilities of a large development. There was a certain abstractness in it which admitted of being filled out and made concrete. I have already spoken of the work of Coleridge as marking an epoch in the religious thought of the English-speaking world. So far as the definite development of the Unitarian thought is concerned, the names which would best indicate certain marked epochs are perhaps those of Channing and Parker.

The early Unitarianism looked chiefly Godward. God was the Father in whose love man may rejoice. In natural relation to the fatherhood of God, Channing emphasized the thought of the sonship of man. The dignity of human nature is the great truth which we specially associate with the thought of Channing. It is a natural corollary of the other truth, but it was one that needed the emphasis which the magnificent enthusiasm of Channing gave to it. That man was made in the image of God had been for ages accepted as a truism. But to see in every man something of the glory of this

divine image — I say actually to see something of this glory in every man — was, so far as I know, at least in these later days, reserved for Channing. What a power did this bring into religious faith! Surely, it was no “pale negation” now. I will not claim for Unitarianism more than its share in the philanthropic work of these later years, but certainly the Unitarian view of human nature is in a special manner fitted to inspire such labor.

I have spoken of Parker as marking a second stage in the development of Unitarianism. I refer to him not as though he stood alone. Carlyle and Emerson and the whole Transcendental movement, though outside of Unitarianism, left their mark upon it. Neither do I mean that Parker may stand as the type of modern Unitarianism. He had affirmations and denials peculiar to himself. He may stand, however, as the representative of one of the most important developments of modern Unitarianism.

Historically speaking, Unitarianism was for the most part the product of Arianism. I mean that the path to Unitarianism has for the most part led through Arianism.

Arianism possessed a certain hardness. God, Christ, and man stood each alone. There was no community of being, no mystical interplay of life with life. Early Unitarianism, as the descendant of Arianism, possessed a little of its hardness. Priestley was indeed, so far as his thought of Christ was concerned, a true humanitarian. Against the persuasions of his friends, he uttered uncompromisingly his denial of the doctrine of the supernatural birth of Jesus. Yet to him and to his fellows the thought of the revelation that was in and through Christ retained something of an artificial character. It was upon this external revelation that their faith largely, and in some respects wholly, rested. Priestley affirms absolutely that outside of this revelation there exists no reason even for the hope of immortality. The element of the artificial which had marked so largely the creeds of Christendom was reduced to a minimum. There was the merest hint of the presence of a scheme according to which men were to be saved. In this artificial and external view of revelation there was still, however, the vestige of such a scheme. Priestley treated, indeed, the New Testament with

the greatest critical freedom; but there yet remained this inner kernel of the technical and the artificial. I have named Parker as the representative of that development in Unitarian thought in which was attained the recognition of the naturalness and universality of man's relation to God. In this, the central principle of Unitarianism came to its full consciousness. There was still whatever there had been before. Men might still have a place in their thought for that which has been called miraculous. Jesus may still stand as the foremost manifestation of God upon the earth. Men may, and, if they see truly, must still, recognize the debt which they owe to him,—a debt incalculable and unequalled. Parker himself could sing:—

“Yes: thou art still the life; thou art the way  
The holiest know, — Light, Life, and Way of heaven.  
And they who dearest hope and deepest pray  
Toil by the light, life, way, which thou hast given.”

But the relation was simple and natural. Christianity takes its place among the religions of the world. If it is supreme above them, it is because of its greater completeness. If it speaks with more authority, it

is because there is found in it more fulness of the divine life.

Stated more profoundly, the thought which marks this later development of the Unitarian faith, or at least that toward which this development is tending, is that of the divine immanence in the world. It is the thought of the presence of God, not at certain points of time or in certain places merely or chiefly, but at all times and places. It is the thought of the divine power, not acting upon the world from without merely, but from within. It finds in the world the presence of a divine life. It echoes the words of Paul that "in him we live and move and have our being." It is this thought which has made impossible any recognition of the special and the artificial, which leaves no place for the vestige of any "scheme" in the management of the world. This thought changes to some extent our vocabulary. It puts new meaning into some words, and makes the use of others impossible. "Do you make of Christ a mere man?" the Unitarian is sometimes asked. In the light of the truth that we are considering, there is seen to be no such thing as "a mere man." There is in all men some germ of the divine life; and,

when we recognize even the faintest beginning of this, there is no limit to be placed upon its possible accomplishment. "Do you leave man," it is asked, "to struggle onward and upward by himself?" No man and no nation is left thus unaided. In the presence of this thought, that which has passed for belief in God's revelation and in God's saving help seems to have a touch of atheism; for, that he may be seen then or there, other times and places seem to be left without his presence.

The two great stages that have marked the later development are, then, the recognition of the dignity of man and of the immanence of God in the world. The early Unitarianism recognized the fatherhood of God. Those noble and emancipated souls rejoiced in the unclouded light of his presence. The truth they saw was cheering and life-giving. However precious it was in its simplicity, it was yet more precious in the fact that it was germinant, that there was within it the power and the necessity of development, that it could and must become larger and more concrete, and absorb into itself the manifold elements of human life and experience.

What I have said of the development of the Unitarian faith is, I rejoice to say, common to a greater or less extent to other forms of Christian belief. It is found even among those who bear names that would ally them to the older creeds, to some even who take these creeds upon their lips. I claim no monopoly of the truth for Unitarians. The spirit that has been stirring in them has been stirring also in other hearts. Old names and old words are beginning to lose their meaning, and an inner brotherhood is beginning to make itself felt between those that seemed most widely separated.

It is possible that every generation since history fairly began has felt itself to some extent exceptional, has felt that in it a critical moment in human destiny has been reached. Certainly, our own age seems to us to form one of the great turning-points in the world's history, and especially in the history of religious thought. So far as the Bible is concerned, criticism has made much that was formerly held without a doubt impossible of belief. Science has shown the facts of the universe sometimes to be in sharp contrast with those which revelation had been supposed to teach. The theory of the develop-

ment of the higher life out of the lower, even of the higher life of man out of the lower life of the world, has left scarcely anything in our thought precisely what it was before. It has been a period of overturning and of upbuilding. No thinking man can have passed through all this change unchanged. Certainly, no church can pass through it and come out precisely what it was before. Forms of speech have changed, and forms of thought have changed more than forms of speech. The churches have changed, and are changing still. The Unitarian Church has changed, and is changing still. What I claim is that the development of the faith of the Unitarian Church through these critical times has been in the direction of the fulfilment of that which was most positive in it, while the development of the faith of most other Protestant Churches has been found in the fading out of what was most specific in them.

Such a statement could not be made in regard to the Papal Church. Within two or three years, a Catholic scientist of great and well-won reputation has published papers recognizing the results both of scientific theory and of Biblical criticism, and claim-



ing that in all these there is nothing hostile to the faith of the Papal Church. It was understood that these utterances were made with a certain authority; and no condemnation of them has been uttered by the Church. The Church that was held to be an anachronism in this nineteenth century has shown thus a special readiness to accept its teaching. Its faith, so far as it has changed, has simply intensified what was most special in it. In these later years, it has added two articles to its creed, — one that of the immaculate conception of the virgin, the other that of the infallibility of the Pope.

We have, then, the Roman Church and the so-called Liberal Church, each developing its faith by affirmations that are simply the unfolding of its fundamental principle; while the churches that stand between the two, so far as they have changed at all, have been giving up much that was most characteristic, or suffering much that was most characteristic to fade into comparative insignificance. I recall only one instance in which the movement has been in the opposite direction, in which one of the fundamental doctrines of the Church has assumed a more intense form. In what is sometimes known

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as the "new theology," the necessity for salvation, of a personal acceptance of Jesus, receives an unwonted prominence. This, however, has been purchased at the cost of the equally fundamental doctrine of the fixed condition of all souls after death, and is accompanied by a fading out of some other doctrines no less important. What have these two extremes of the Christian world — the Papal Church and the Unitarian Church — in common, so that in each that which is most fundamental is being developed into new intensity, while in so many churches the change is in the fading out of what had seemed most fundamental? They do have one other thing in common, whether it may or may not help to explain that to which I have referred: both recognize, as most other branches of the Christian Church have in the past failed to recognize, the present authority of the Spirit of God. Other Churches have claimed to rest on the authority of the Bible. The Papal Church claims that the Bible rests upon its authority. Do you want the confirmation of miracles? It will work them for you to-day. Do you want some direct utterance from God? Listen to what the Church says

to-day. The Papal Church is then, in its way, the Church of this nineteenth century, in that it is bound to no record of the past, but stands the ever-fresh and ever-living incarnation of the Spirit of God. Thus it is that it can meet the waves of thought, like the ship that is its symbol, and keep serenely on its appointed course.

The Liberal Church recognizes also as supreme the authority of the present Spirit of God. It finds this not embodied in a single institution, like the Papal Church. It seeks it not in trances, in ecstasies, and special revelations, as so many enthusiasts have done. It recognizes its power working through the normal faculties of the human soul, through the despised reason, through the loving heart, through the heaven-seeking aspirations of the spirit. It finds its revelation in the magnificence of nature, in its sublime order and harmony, in the grander sublimity of the moral law, in the tenderness of human hearts and the heroism of human lives. If it finds it most of all in Jesus, it is because he stands as the representative of what is loftiest and best in faith and life, because he brought to light new spiritual potencies in man, and thus

a grander and tenderer thought of God. Other forms of faith may accept the revelations of our modern science. The liberal faith rejoices in them, for they exhibit that orderly progression in the history of the world which its fundamental principles would lead it to expect. So far as other Protestant Churches are changing, they are approaching a position like that which the Liberal Church now occupies. It might not be too extravagant a forecast if we conjecture that, in the no one can guess how remote future, there shall be but two bodies in the Christian Church, — one the Papal Church, standing for faith in a narrow and supernatural ecclesiasticism, and the other the Liberal Church, whatever name it may bear and whatever form it may assume, embodying the faith in a spiritual and divine naturalism. This prophecy I do not care to make. I simply point you to the tendencies in Christendom pointing in these opposite directions, and to the massing of forces on the one side and on the other that indicates the possibility of a line of cleavage such as that which I have supposed.

We have thus considered the beauty of the faith which marked the beginning of

our modern Unitarianism, and the fulness into which its later thought has developed. While we rejoice in this fulness, let us not forget that these early Unitarians held all that is essential to a calm, glad, and exalted religious faith. Let us be grateful to them for the peaceful revolution in religious belief that they accomplished. Let us catch some inspiration from their memory; and may our lives become as sweet, as sincere, and as earnest as theirs, and may we feel the power of a faith as devout and as uplifting as that by which their lives were blessed!



THE FAITH OF SCIENCE AND THE  
SCIENCE OF FAITH





## THE FAITH OF SCIENCE AND THE SCIENCE OF FAITH

THE words "faith" and "science" are often used as if they stood to one another in a relation not merely of antithesis, but in one of opposition and exclusion. We often speak of the realm of faith and the realm of science, as if each was a world by itself. As soon as an object enters the realm of science, we are apt to feel that it has left the realm of faith; and so long as an object remains in the realm of faith, it is felt to be, by that fact, excluded from the realm of science. Many believe that the realm of science is surely and steadily encroaching upon that of faith; and many are looking, some with dread and some with hope, to see the realm of faith becoming smaller and smaller, until at last there will be no place left for it, and science shall reign supreme and alone. Indeed, this antagonism between faith and science is felt by many to constitute the great dramatic or even tragic interest of the present age.

This whole view, however, is founded upon error. There is no such thing as a

realm of science apart from the realm of faith. There is no exclusion or opposition in the relation of science and faith. They have to do with the same facts. They represent simply different sides of the same knowledge. Faith, we may say, furnishes the basis, and science the superstructure; or we may say that faith furnishes the material, and science elaborates this material into its perfect form. Faith, we may say, is the nebula, and science the completed world which is developed out of it. Or, better still, faith may be represented by the great law of attraction in its varied forms, while science is the solid-seeming world that is bound together and upheld by this. Thus there is no science that does not imply a corresponding faith, and there is no faith that is not capable of a scientific elaboration. The only difference between what we call the realm of science and what we call the realm of faith is, that the realm of faith is the broadest, for the reason that the whole extent of it has not yet been developed into science. So far as science extends, its field is identical with that of faith. The progress of science neither encroaches upon nor limits faith. It simply elaborates more and more

of the material of faith into its fitting and true form. But the material is still as truly that of faith, as it was in its simplest and most unformed state. It is because I consider this relation a vital one, that I have selected, or rather accepted, it for my theme on the present occasion. Our great theological necessity is felt to be that of giving to our faith a scientific form; but this work cannot be approached, or its methods considered, without first taking note of the faith which is the basis of what in our common speech we term science. The study of the faith of science is the essential introduction to a comprehension of the nature of the science of faith.

The faith on which the magnificent structure of our science rests is twofold, or rather it acts in a manner which may be best considered under two distinct heads. In the first place, it gives to science the real world which is its field. I need not spend many words to illustrate the fact, which is recognized even by our most simple and primary works on metaphysics, that we have only certain sensations, which we organize into a world. We cannot by any reasoning get beyond these. Every man carries his own

world in his own brain. The mountains, the oceans, the stars, the cities, the men he meets, the heroes that he honors, whether of the past or the present, — these are all the scenery and the inhabitants of his own mind. It is only by faith that he gives to these an outward reality. He does this for no *reason*, but simply because he cannot help it. Their objective reality can neither be proved nor disproved. The belief in it is above, or beneath, all proof. It is stronger even than the instinct of life. I need not illustrate this by reference to the fact, that a man will die for one of these phantoms of his brain. We need simply refer to the fact, that the man believes himself, in any way and to any degree, mortal. Because these figures that flit across the inner world which he carries with him pass at last and do not return, he believes that he also shall pass and shall not return. Because the figures that take part in these tragic or comic scenes die, the great stage and theatre shall also disappear. In a word, the man puts himself, for life or for death, upon a level with this population of his own mind, with this creation of his own thought. This unconscious condescension shows how strong is the faith

which gives to us the real world of things, of persons and events, — which is a world of faith, and of faith only. It may be remarked, in passing, that the truth that has just been referred to shows how impossible it is for the mind ever to receive any proof from the outward world that shall disturb its faith in its own immortality; for

“The mind is like the sky, —  
Than all it holds more deep, more high.”

If the reality of the outward world, and thus the very field and material of science, is given by faith, no less does faith, in the second place, furnish the *methods* of science. Science is a constant progress from the seen to the unseen. By the mighty instrumentality of induction, it makes the little knowledge that rests upon experience the basis of a vaster knowledge, that stretches far beyond the reach of any possible experience. From a few cases it reasons to all similar cases. From the past it reasons to the future. It is as confident in regard to the future, as it is in regard to the past; as confident in regard to the facts it has not witnessed, as in regard to those that are most familiar to its experience. By what right does it thus pass from the

few to the many, from the seen to the unseen, from the past to the future? Hume affirmed that the mind had no such right and power; yet the mind continually exercises this right and this power. What, then, is the basis of our faith in the inductions of science? It is interesting to see how loath the human mind is to give up belief in outward foundations and supports, and the naïve confidence with which it assumes them. Nothing is more natural than the Hindoo theory, that the earth rests upon an elephant, and the elephant upon a tortoise; or than that of the old lady who believed that the earth rested upon a rock, and that upon another, and that there were rocks all the way down. The mind naturally assumes a foundation, and it is long before the question forces itself, "Upon what does this foundation rest?" So it lays rocks beneath the earth, or places a patient elephant beneath it; it forms crystal spheres to support the stars, and thinks that all is firmly based. We can now hardly realize the importance of the revolution by which the mind reaches the conviction, that there is no outward support for anything; that there is no point of rest in all the material universe; that everything

floats, if that can be said to float that is not even upheld by any medium; that sun and moon and stars, and the earth itself, move through the infinite space upheld by nothing; that there is no arch for the stars, no pillars for the earth; that there is only vacancy above and below everything. A revolution similar to this has yet to be accomplished in the world of the mind and the spirit. We return to the question, On what rests our faith in the inductions of science? John Stuart Mill affirms, with naïve simplicity like that of the old lady who thought that there were rocks all the way down, that faith in induction rests upon induction; in other words, that there is induction all the way down. He says this with some slight circumlocution indeed, but this is the condensed substance of his statement.<sup>1</sup> I know not

<sup>1</sup> His words are: "Whatever be the most proper mode of expressing it, the proposition that the course of nature is uniform is the fundamental principle, or general axiom, of Induction. It would yet be a great error to offer this large generalization as any explanation of the inductive process. On the contrary, I hold it to be itself an instance of induction by no means of the most obvious kind."—*Logic*, Book III. chap. iii, 1.

He further explains his meaning thus: "We arrive at this universal law [of causation] by generalization from many laws of inferior generality. The *generalizing propensity*,

whether the view of such a mighty intellect, resting so unquestioningly on such a baseless series of foundations, should make us more or less reliant upon the results of our own thoughts. And there is nothing that shows how natural it is for men to assume foundations without asking what they rest upon, than the fact that so many accept this statement as all-sufficient; that so many, in fact, cannot be made to see why the statement, that faith in induction rests upon induction, does not explain everything completely.

The simple fact is, the mind has the instinct of generalization. Just as it cannot help looking through the eyes, and believing what it sees; so it cannot help generalizing, and believing in the results of its generalization. This instinct, then, and the unquestioning and often unconscious faith that we have in it, is the only basis of the mighty *which, instinctive or not, is one of the most powerful principles of our nature*, does not indeed wait for the period when such a generalization becomes strictly legitimate. The mere unreasoning propensity to expect what has been often experienced, doubtless led men to believe that everything had a cause, before they could have conclusive evidence of that truth. But even this cannot be supposed to have happened until many cases of causation, or, in other words, many partial uniformities of sequence, had become familiar." — *Ib.* chap. xxi. 1.



world of our modern science. But does not our faith in this rest on our experience of its reliability? Yes; but what is experience but prolonged induction? And why do we trust to experience? Or shall we say that it is experience all the way down?

There have been times when there was much discussion in regard to innate truths. Some affirmed them in almost unlimited profusion; some denied them altogether. The latter asked how they were packed away in the mind; and why, if they were innate, they were not present in the consciousness from infancy. Each party was partially right and partially wrong. Strictly speaking, we have no innate truths. We have instincts which come to consciousness at different periods of the spirit's growth. Each of these instincts implies — if it be reliable — a certain construction of the outer world, and a certain relation to it of the individual. The instinct being given, a competent mind could deduce from it this group of circumstances and relations. Thus the faith that we have in any instinct implies, when it is fully developed into consciousness, faith in a certain truth which is the basis and the end of this instinct. Thus there is latent in

every instinct, involved in it, implied by it, an idea that may sooner or later reach its consciousness. Thus, if we use the terms "innate ideas," and are asked where they were at first stored in the mind, we must say that first they exist potentially in the form of instincts, as the destined flower and fruit exist potentially in the germ. The idea or truth that is involved in the instinct of generalization is this,—that the world is a systematic and organized whole. If this were not so, the instinct of generalization would only deceive us. As the plant slowly but surely reaches its flowering, so does this instinct slowly but surely attain to the full consciousness of this idea. It is helped to this by experience; but yet it is itself the implied, though not always recognized, basis of faith in experience. And it is a most marked and important fact in this connection, that the first distinct utterance of this truth was in defiance of experience. The Eleatics affirmed the One. They did not seek to reconcile the many with this—to find a unity in the manifold. They simply denied the many. They denied all the results of experience. There was no manifold. There was no motion. The senses deceive.

There is only the One. Thus did the grand truth of the absolute unity, in its first historic utterance, set itself up against the concrete world of experience, and attempt to sweep it utterly out of existence with a proud denial. The task of philosophy and of science ever since has been to reconcile this unity and this diversity, to find unity in the diversity, and to look upon the manifold as one. The unity for which it has sought is the unity of an organic wholeness. The faith in the reality of this has been its life and its inspiration. The faith in the reality of this has gained clearness and strength by all the magnificent triumphs of its inductive methods; but, consciously or unconsciously expressed or implied, it at first prompted and gave authority to these methods. For without the instinct of generalization, and faith in this instinct, though every fact in the universe of all past time were known, we could not reason in regard to a single fact of the future, any more than the duck could swim even though you threw it into the water, or the bird could fly though you threw it into the air, unless each had the fitting instinct and instrument. Rightly looked upon, there is hardly anything in

the whole reach of our knowledge sublimer than this faith, by means of which the magnificent world of modern science floats unsupported, and needing no support, self-buoyed, self-poised, and self-sufficient. And how ridiculous does this sublimity make that arrogance appear which would boast of the solid foundations of science, in opposition to the baselessness of faith ! So one might — mocking at the things that are invisible — stamp his foot, and say that he would accept nothing less solid, visible, and tangible than this material world ; yet how foolish does he look when we picture him to ourselves clinging to the outside of this little spinning ball of thinly crusted fire, whirling through space with a swiftness that his thought cannot conceive, with only the infinite depths of nothingness beneath him, yet boasting of the solid ground on which he stands. Truly he has a solid support beneath him. But his ultimate reliance is not on that which is visible and tangible : it is on the mighty though invisible forces that sustain this. So foolish is the pride of one who might contemptuously compare faith with science. The world of science is a world of faith. It rests on no other foundation, is held together by

no other power. But therefore it is that its foundation is so secure. Therefore it is that it moves on its way with the unconscious confidence of the round world itself.

The faith, then, which is the basis of science, which at first exists unconsciously in the simple instinct of generalization, and which at last, by the aid of experience, though always far in advance of experience, reaches its full consciousness, is the faith that the universe is a perfect and organic whole. The faith which is the basis of religion and of theology is only the extension and completion of this. It is the faith, namely, that this whole is animated and governed by a power of good; that everything is working out some good end; and that all things are uniting, or will be made to unite, in the accomplishment of this one purpose of goodness. Though this faith comes comparatively slowly to its full consciousness, though it struggles up at first like an untimely plant struggling with bitter winds and biting frosts, yet it has its root very deep in our original nature. We find it implied in the earliest and most fundamental instincts of the race. Indeed the free, undoubting, glad obedience to any natural instinct implies this faith.

Still more is it implied by the more special religious and moral instincts. The instinct of worship; the instinct of prayer; the instinct of trust; the power of conscience, in which the good asserts, by an undoubting instinct, its supremacy, approving or condemning all things as a divinely appointed judge,—all of these imply the supremacy of goodness in the universe, and when fully developed, assisted by experience, though still far in advance of experience, unite and culminate in a conscious faith in this supremacy. The development of this faith is often hindered, and its purity marred, by the mingling of other and lower sentiments and instincts with these. Personal fear long holds back this trusting confidence, refusing to be wholly guided and comforted by it. The sense of personal ill-desert shrinks from faith in this infinite and all-ruling goodness, which it feels must be just, because it is good. The imperfection of the moral sense blurs the beauty of the ideal of perfect goodness; for it knows not really what it shall call wholly good, or what it shall seek in seeking for it. In all this, religious faith finds its parallel in what we have called the faith of science; and indeed the history of

the one finds its analogon at every step in the history of the other, with this difference, — that the faith of science has reached a point of development far in advance of that which religious faith has yet reached. Indeed, it is only yet reaching, and that very slowly, the general recognition of its foundation principle, — a principle which Jesus announced eighteen hundred years ago, but which became speedily hidden and lost, like a little leaven buried in the mass, which is to be transformed by it into its own likeness.

As the faith of science made its first utterance of itself in the face of experience, and as ever since it has been strongest in the face of facts that seem most to oppose it, apparent lawlessness only rousing it to seek, with fresh confidence and zeal, the laws which it knew must exist in spite of apparent lawlessness, — so faith in the perfect goodness which arranged, and which guides, and is present in, all things is often strongest when all experience would seem to oppose it most. As the Eleatics sweep away the universe that the One might exist in its absolute unity, so theologians have swept goodness out of the world, that the one good might not have any connection with, and thus



no stain or dishonor from, this world, that has so much of evil in it; and often, when apparent evil presses most closely about the soul, does it have most faith in the infinite good. When the outward world satisfies, the soul often rests content without the conscious impulse to look beyond, and to explain the little evil that it may find: but when in the outer world evil seems to overbalance the good; when the life, stripped by loss and overshadowed by sorrow, seems to have nothing left; or when the outward life itself, passed perhaps in weariness and sorrow, has reached its extreme limit, and there seems no outward hope possible, — then how often does this faith in the perfect goodness assert itself with a mighty recoil, and the soul cry, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him”!

As the faith of science, drunken, we might almost say, with its own self-confidence, has constructed wild and baseless systems of philosophy; as with more sober thought it has constructed systems of the physical universe, of wheels within wheels, spheres upon spheres, cycles and epicycles, in which systems of philosophy and systems of the physical universe there was nothing true but



this, that the universe is a perfect and systematic whole, — so the faith in the absolute Goodness has sought to realize itself in many a strange and fantastic form. It has reeled through wild creeds and systems and theologies; it has devised hells of endless flame, to burn up or burn forever the evil that it found; it has framed schemes compared with which the scheme of the astronomers with its dizzy cycles and epicycles were simplicity, that by means of them the perfect good might be seen to accomplish itself in the world: and when it could do no better, and saw no other outlet or escape; when it had found or established an infinite and endless evil, — even then this faith could not be quieted or repressed; and, seeing nothing else left for it, it has bowed before the infinite evil, and said, “Since this is supreme, it must be good: let us worship it.”

But though faith in the perfect goodness slowly struggles into consciousness out of darkness and uncertainty; though, at first, belief in this rests side by side with other beliefs, to be discussed in connection with these or apart from them, so that men may assume the existence of God, and yet question whether or not he is good, — yet by

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slow degrees it assumes the leading place: until at last, as in science the faith in the unity of the universe and the omnipresence of law comes to be the one truth in which all other truths find their place and their support; so in religion faith in the absoluteness and the supremacy of good comes to be recognized as the one truth, in which all others find their place and their support.

Few facts are more striking than the manner in which men will use a word, confident that it has a meaning, long before they know clearly what its meaning is. Thus men used the word "cause," divining its meaning, although they could not tell what it was, and although the clearest thinkers denied that it had any meaning like that which they supposed; until, within a few years, science, by the discovery of the conservation of force and the correlation of forces, has showed us what is the real meaning of the word "cause." So men used the word "faith," with vague and varying meaning; but so soon as we recognize the supremacy and absoluteness of goodness as the one central and all-embracing religious truth, we know what is the meaning of the word "faith." Faith is confidence. We have

faith in that in which we have confidence. You may believe that the bridge you are crossing is not strong enough to support you, yet you would not say you had faith in the weakness of the bridge. If you have any faith in it, it is in its strength. We see this expressed in one of those Bible definitions which we grow so slowly to comprehend, — “Faith is the substance of things *hoped for*.” Thus one may have faith in a future in which every spirit shall have a loving providence still watching over it, guiding its feet through whatever paths may lead it soonest home; but, though one may believe in endless misery, it can never be an object of *faith*. So one may have faith in the integrity of human nature, but one cannot have faith in its depravity.

Faith having this meaning, we understand how there is one absolute religion. We speak of religions as existing side by side, as being true or false; we reckon up the number of religions in the world: but there is but one religion, and all forms of religion, so called, are speculatively religious or irreligious according to the degree in which they express or fail to express this. So far as any belief is faith in an all-ruling and an all-over-

ruling goodness, so far it is religious. So far as it throws doubt upon this or denies it, so far it is irreligious. The religion of the intellect is this recognition of goodness. The irreligion of the intellect is the denial of this. This denial, if it apes religious forms, we call superstition; and superstition bears the same relation to religion that the dreams of the alchemist do to science. To one who has seen clearly that religion is this faith in an absolute goodness, the nature of religion can never again be a matter of doubt. He may, perhaps, lose this faith: if he does, he loses his religion. But the question as to what religion teaches on this point, the question between a true religion and a false religion, can never again arise.

We thus see the possibility of the science of religious faith, and also what must be the nature of this science. As physical science forms itself about faith in the absolute order, so religious science gathers about faith in the absolute goodness. Whatever must necessarily result from this goodness, it affirms; whatever absolutely contradicts this, it denies: and it assumes without question whatever must be assumed, in order to reconcile known and finite facts with the belief in the

infinite goodness. Where it sees mystery, it believes that this is only a veil concealing the perfect goodness; as physical science sees in any mystery only its own ignorance of the law that rules there. And when this science of faith doubts of its results, its only doubt is whether the reality be not something better than it has dreamed.

The science of faith has vast and varied content. It exalts itself to a sublime and sweet mysticism. If the infinite good is working over all and in all, then it must be working over and in us. This infinite good cannot be blind, cannot be cold; it cannot be senseless. The very word implies, in some vast sense, a purpose, a providence, a love. Our very being must have its root in this, and, so far as it is real, must be one of its channels or manifestations. The truth of immortality is found in it; for if we believe

“That nothing walks with aimless feet,”

we cannot believe that the feet of loving, aspiring, hoping, suffering, sorrowing mortals tend only to the darkness and nothingness of the grave; but as when, in wandering through some unknown country, we see a road beaten with much travel, leading down

to the shore of a river, and into the river, and lost there, we do not doubt that a road emerges also from the other side, and that between them, uniting them, is a ferry or a ford,—so we know that the road which leads to the river of death emerges on the other side. And, again, if we believe

“That nothing walks with aimless feet,”

still less can we believe that the feet of any spirit are guided across the river of death only to be led at last to the lake that burneth forever. We see also how the science of faith involves faith in human nature, faith in the great movements of history, faith in the struggles of human thought and of human life.

I repeat that it must not be supposed that we at first reach these special truths by reasoning from this general faith in the absolute goodness. As faith in the organic unity and completeness of the world is involved in, and evolved out of, the half-conscious instinct of trust in the outer world, of confidence in the teachings of experience, or, in a word, the instinct of generalization; although at last this complete and conscious faith gives to this original instinct a logical

basis, and clears it from much confusion, and guides it in safe paths,—so the faith in the absolute goodness is involved in, and evolved out of, the instinct of trust, by which man has in every age approached the outer universe, confident that in some way its nature is akin to his nature, the instinct of worship, the instinct of prayer, the instinct that looks beyond the barrier of death, and the instinct of conscience; although at last it rounds these into a whole, gives them a logical foundation, frees them from darkness and superstition, and leads them to the perfect goal towards which in their weakness and their blindness they were tending.

But though, like the faith in the perfect order and unity of the world, the faith in the perfect goodness is in a sense self-supported, yet like that it has many confirmations. It is confirmed by the wise guidance of history, in which it sees how evil in the long-run is lost in the good, and has been indeed the instrument of the good. It finds confirmation in the secret history of many a life, in which events that seemed the darkest and saddest were yet transmuted into the best blessings. Indeed, what soul cannot find



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this confirmation in its own history, cannot see where sorrow and failure and disappointment, those things which we call evil, were really working out the best good for it; or, if they did not result in this, that it was alone to blame. All such experience illustrates and confirms the faith, that it is the inner nature of all things to be transformed into blessing.

It finds confirmation in physical science. While every instinct of plant or animal has its correlative reality outside of it; while every hunger has somewhere its appropriate food; while every rootlet has somewhere its appropriate soil; while, if there should float hither, from some other planet, a bit of feather, you would not doubt that there was an atmosphere there, — it cannot be

“ That every chick of every bird,  
And weed and rock-moss, are preferred ; ”

and that the most deeply rooted, the most universal, and the sublimest instincts of man were given him in vain; that he has the hungering after the infinite good, when there is no good to satisfy it; that he “ sits here shaping wings to fly,” when there is no space and no atmosphere anywhere in which he



may use these wings. Indeed, the faith of science and religious faith imply and complete one another; and though now we have to take each to a certain extent by itself, and compare the one with the other, it will doubtless at some time be seen that the two are really one; that there is but one faith and one science.

Religious faith finds also confirmation in the faith and testimony of the truest and best souls, in the fact that the loftier and truer and more natural the soul, the more clearly does it discern the perfect goodness that is in and over all things; that Jesus, the loftiest and the best, saw this the most clearly; nay,—and this will show us the circle in which we are moving, and the self-supporting nature of this faith—that we recognize him as the loftiest and the best, because he saw this the most clearly, and lived more than any other in the consciousness of it.

We see thus the relation of authority to the science of faith. That voice has most authority to the soul which calls forth the fullest and strongest response from its best instincts and impulses. This is what Jesus meant when he said, “My sheep hear my

voice." We often speak as if the Book of Genesis related the story of the creation. It does not profess to do this. It puts the fact of the creation far back, "in the beginning." Its story begins when God said, "Let there be light." Its story is not of creation, but of formation. So many seem to believe that Jesus created the world of our religious faith and confidence, and that this rests suspended only by the fiat of his will ; but the spiritual heaven and earth were also created in the beginning. The gospel tells no story of this first formation. But, though this world had been created, it "was without form and void, and darkness rested on the face of the deep ;" and, though the spirit of God moved over the face of the waters, it found no rest or recognition. The darkness comprehended it not. But God, through the lips of Jesus, said, "Let there be light ; and there was light." The world rounded itself into completeness, and clothed itself with beautiful life. The clear heavens wrapped it in, and the light of the sun glorified it. It is no wonder that this should seem to us like a creation.

I have compared in many points what, for convenience, I have called physical science—

though the name does not properly include all I would include in it—and the science of religious faith. There is one point of great difference. The former finds its strength in the minuteness of its application. The more thoroughly and definitely it can explain every little fact, the more perfect is it. The science of faith finds its strength in the largeness of its application. It believes that all is for the best. Experience, in many ways, confirms this faith; but when it attempts to show, in regard to everything, just how it is for the best, it falls into guesses and dreams. Its scope, in regard to details, is rather practical than theoretical. It is safer when it urges that we should make the best of this and that, than when it undertakes to say precisely what God meant by this or that; although, now and then, even this last flashes into the light of certainty.

But though the science of faith is, like physical science, confined within circumscribed limits, yet our outward life and our inward life are both made up largely of what is not strictly scientific. It is stated, I know not with what truth, that the greatest naturalist of the country never makes a prophecy in regard to the weather, for the reason that

the science of meteorology is not in a state to justify such prophecy. In fact we have no scientific right to predict a change of weather ; yet much of our life is shaped and guided by such foreknowledge. So, in our spiritual life, we may admit much that is not absolutely scientific, provided it does not contradict the fundamental principles of the science of faith. There is left space for the play of imagination, for the dreams of hope. One individual, or one class of individuals, will need and will use this privilege more than another. One, for instance, will look forward with a simple and quiet faith into the future, content to know simply that love is immortal and infinite; another will love to shape a heaven, and fill it with fair shapes of blessedness. Thus, while one may be calm in the simplicity of his great hope, the other may be buoyant and enthusiastic, fired by the prospect that stretches in clear outline and coloring before him. They are like an elder and a younger brother approaching together the home they love. One walks with quiet and sober tread ; the other leaps and dances along his way. The older seems to the younger cold and indifferent; the younger seems to the older

childish and uncontrolled. But they are brothers. With equal love and equal longing they are approaching the same home, and the same love is waiting to greet them both.



THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE  
SUBLIME





## THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE SUBLIME

As an introduction to the examination that is before us let us, in imagination, start from the mouth of the river Rhine, and follow the stream up toward its source. The lower Rhine in itself has little charm. There is, indeed, always a beauty in water and shore, in smiling meadows, and in the over-arching sky. In the lower Rhine there is added to such charm the quaintness of the frequent windmills, and sometimes an interest of architecture, as one passes through towns and villages. But nothing of all this would specially attract the traveller. At Cologne begins what the world has known as the beauty of the Rhine. Now the river winds among picturesque hills covered with vines or forests and crowned, often, by some crumbling ruin. This beauty, indeed, is not now what it was. The river has been protected, and at the same time humiliated, by embankments. The forests have been cut

away. Modern buildings stare upon us more and more from the shores and the hill-sides that had been sacred to the past. The clay color of the water seems more fitted to the present surroundings than it did to the picturesqueness of the former times. I can now almost remember it as yellow, which I could not in earlier years, when memory at least painted the water to make it correspond with the beauty through which it flowed. In spite of all this, the middle Rhine is beautiful, and, if we criticise it, it is only when we compare it with its former self. Pressing upward we reach the region of the Via Mala. Here the scene has changed. The stream, white with the foam of its haste, presses along the narrow channel which it has formed for itself between precipitous walls of rock. We look down at the river and it seems so far beneath us! We look up, and the steep rocky walls rise above us towards the heavens. We look around, and are shut in on every side as our course, following that of the current so far below, winds through this massive masonry of nature. On the summit of the lofty mountain which forms one side of the entrance to this chasm stand the ruins of the

old castle of Rhetius, which from above looks down upon the winding way, dominating it from its height.

Lower down the stream we had simply delight in watching the beauty through which we passed, save now and then when some sterner height and narrower passage gave to our delight a touch of awe. Here there is still gladness; but the awe has become more profound. Indeed, we call the scene awful rather than beautiful. Beauty has passed into sublimity.

Examples like this might lead to the thought that sublimity is only an intenser form of the beautiful, so that one passes through beauty to reach sublimity. Other examples, however, suggest different results. Let us compare, for instance, Mount Vesuvius and Mont Blanc. Mont Blanc is an example of sublimity developed out of beauty. The mighty mass of rock and ice and snow that overpowers us by its vastness is largely made up of what on a smaller scale is simply beautiful. Snow, so long as it preserves its purity, is beautiful under whatever relations it may be viewed. It is beautiful when it clothes a stretch of hill and plain with its whiteness. It is beautiful when it

drapes the pines which bow beneath the burden. It is beautiful when the separate flakes, with their delicate crystalline formation, rest upon the sleeve. In the snow mountain we have only another form of the same beauty. But there is Mount Vesuvius as well as Mont Blanc. If Mont Blanc shows the sublimity to which beauty may attain, Vesuvius shows that sublimity is possible when there is no touch of beauty. In Mont Blanc we have the sublimity of light, in Mount Vesuvius that of darkness. As we reach the summit it is black and lifeless. No bird finds its way through the sulphurous air. In spite of, or through, this wildness of desolation, we receive an impression of sublimity equal at least to that which the fairest snow mountain may furnish. If we repeat the experiment which we tried in the case of Mont Blanc, and reduce this upper portion of Mount Vesuvius to the elements of which it consists, and reduce these to the dimensions under which we ordinarily meet them, we should have before us nothing more beautiful than an ash-heap.

There is, indeed, another way of reducing the mountain till it loses its sublimity, and that is by distance. As seen from Castella-

mare, across the Bay of Naples, its mighty bulk made ethereal by the distance and by the soft Italian atmosphere, its graceful shape, surmounted by its flag of smoke, harmonizes well with the general beauty of the scene. It has, however, changed its character by the process. The rudeness and desolateness which gave to it its sublimity have been refined away.

The sublime may thus be produced by elements that in themselves are beautiful, and by those that are the opposite of beautiful. The relation between beauty and sublimity might, then, seem to be wholly accidental. Our common thought and speech, however, contradict this assumption. The two are spoken of together. We say "The beautiful and the sublime." Our scientific thought unites them precisely as our superficial thought does. Our treatises on æsthetics discuss sublimity as they discuss beauty. The two are thus placed side by side, as dividing the æsthetic world between them. Even Kant, who distinguished them most sharply from one another, making them as antithetical to one another as subject and object, spirit and matter, even he treats them in the same connection; and by their posi-

tion in his discussion seems practically to deny this heterogeneity.

The work of Kant has been so influential in the development of modern thought upon this theme, and brings out so emphatically one view of sublimity which, whether we accept it or not as true, we must admit to be in itself sublime, that we shall do well to give some consideration to it.

We are met first by the startling fact that Kant, so far as his system was concerned, recognized no outward object as sublime. Here he makes that grand distinction between beauty and sublimity to which I just referred. The seat of beauty is in the outward world ; that of sublimity is in the soul. The outward object may be beautiful, but there is no sublimity save in the spiritual world. The sense of sublimity is awakened when the soul, startled or stimulated by certain outward objects, recoils upon itself, and feels the grandeur of its own nature and the awe which the spiritual world alone can produce.

Kant recognizes two forms of sublimity ; one he calls mathematical, the other dynamic. One is produced by the contemplation of vastness, the other by that of power. An object produces the effect of sublimity by its

vastness when the mind finds it impossible to represent by the imagination the extent which it recognizes as really existing. The understanding finds some unit of measurement which it applies successively, pressing from point to point as it strives to comprehend the vastness which it studies. The imagination tries to keep pace with it, representing its results under some form which can be contemplated as a whole. Striving to grasp the result of the advancing measurements, however, it loses that already reached. It can only put so much into its picture. When it strives to do more it loses what it has gained. It is thus bewildered and made dizzy by the sweeping before it of what it cannot apprehend. This practical immeasurableness of the object which is beheld, this impotence of the imagination to keep pace with the understanding, suggests the idea of the infinite. The reason stretches out after this idea of infinitude. It holds the idea even if it can never fully grasp or represent it. It feels not only that no imagination can picture it, and that no measurement can exhaust it; it feels that no object in the external world can manifest it. The soul has thus a sense of its exaltation over

whatever the material universe contains. It has an idea which would bankrupt the universe should this undertake to show it forth. It is this sense of the loftiness of the spiritual nature which constitutes, according to Kant, the feeling of sublimity. We call the outer object sublime, simply by the force of association, because in connection with it we experience the power of sublimity. The outer object, however, is not sublime. The soul and the inconceivable powers which manifest themselves in and through it are all which can properly be spoken of as sublime.

The other form of the sublime recognized by Kant is the dynamic. The sense of it arises when we find ourselves in the presence of the mighty forces of nature, and feel how helpless we should be if exposed to their power. Even, however, with the feeling of this helplessness in the conflict thus represented by the imagination comes the sense of something which these destructive forces cannot reach. The spirit feels that by its lofty nature and the relations in which it stands to the infinite and the eternal it is raised far above the forces of the material world. Its real substance cannot be touched by them. Thus, even in the defeat which



the imagination pictures as the outer man is crushed by these relentless powers of nature, comes a sense of victory in the feeling that the real man cannot be touched by them.

This relation to the outer world might have been put more strongly than it is by Kant. The peril, as he describes it, is imaginary. There have been, however, those who in a storm at sea have lost all sense of danger in the exultation produced by the play of the mighty forces in the midst of which they stood. The ship was like a mere cockleshell upon the waves, rolled and tossed by them till it seemed almost impossible that it should escape uncrushed. These brave men, sometimes, indeed, brave women, have remained in the midst of the peril, lashed for safety to the mast, forgetful of everything save the magnificence of the scene. According to Kant, the joy that they felt arose from the sense of their own exaltation above the wildness of the wind and the sea. The tempest-tossed ocean, according to Kant, is simply horrible. No pleasure can come from contemplating it. The satisfaction that the scene brings is that of the sublimity of the spirit that can survey it

undismayed. This dignity is not of the spirit in its mere individuality, but as it represents the spiritual forces of the universe to which it is akin.

This, freely stated, is Kant's theory of the sublime. In reading it one has a sense of sublimity, which, superficially considered, might be regarded as a testimony to its truth. If one recalls, however, one's own experience in the matter, it will be found that this subjective exaltation, resulting from a recoil upon one's self and from a sense of spiritual and moral realities, does not exhaust, and does not always accompany, the manifestations of sublimity. In point of fact Kant himself would seem to have forgotten his theory when in the presence of the sublimities of nature, and to have felt emotions of the sublime for which his theory hardly had a place. There is a passage in his works which is familiar to many to whom all else he has written is a sealed book. It is one of the very few passages in which he rises into eloquence, and it is the most eloquent of them all. It is interesting to see in it how even his long and involved sentences can catch a glow from the emotion that utters itself through them, so that one forgets their

involution until one attempts to translate them into an equivalent English speech. It is the passage in which he speaks of the two objects of sublimity which fill the soul with a deeper awe the oftener that we contemplate them: one, the starry heavens above; the other, the moral law within. He pictures the relations into which we are brought by each. The contemplation of the starry heavens makes us see ourselves in a vast material universe, in which the world on which we stand is but a point. The spirit feels itself annihilated by the thought. The moral law, on the other hand, brings the spirit into relation in which every act has infinite worth, compared with which the external universe is as nothing. In this passage it is noticeable that we have two objects of sublimity, whereas according to the theory of Kant there should be but one. The external nature should have been sublime because it arouses the sense of the grandeur of the moral law; whereas, in the passage, the starry heavens are in themselves sublime. It may be said, indeed, that in this passage Kant simply uses the common mode of speech, as he does so often. There seems, however, a genuineness and a passion in this

outburst of enthusiasm which makes it appear a *naïve* expression of actual feeling and not a mere "*façon de parler*."

It is a little singular that Kant, who experienced so intensely the sense of sublimity, should have failed to perceive its real nature, while Hegel, who stated somewhat more truly the relation in which this sense stands to the outer world, should appear to have been utterly devoid of the actual experience of it, so far, at least, as anything except intellectual and spiritual realities are concerned. The attempt to realize the endlessness of eternity by setting up one distant limit after another, only to see that we are no nearer the conception of eternity than we were at the start, was to him simply tedious. The worlds on worlds which astronomy reveals were not to him sublime. He found sublimity only in the laws by which these worlds are governed.

In his more formal treatment of the theme Hegel found sublimity in the fact that the objects which we call sublime suggest the power which is manifesting itself in them and in all things, but which they are utterly unable to fully show forth. We have thus a suggestion of the Infinite. There is in this,

however, little that is characteristic of his thought.

Hegel's real view of sublimity comes out most clearly in his discussions in regard to religion, and especially in regard to art. It may be freely expressed as follows: In the beautiful object form and content, the expression and the thing to be expressed, the universal and the individual are in complete accord. The type is fulfilled in the exemplar. In the sublime, on the contrary, the universal meets us in its bare abstractness. To put the thing more simply and concretely, in beauty the elements and forces of nature exhibit themselves in harmonious relations. The power that is in nature comes near to us. It manifests itself in certain details, harmoniously related, so that it is easy of apprehension. In sublimity these elements and forces manifest themselves each for itself. We have fewer details that lead us on to the easy apprehension of their presence. A mountain that presents itself with precipitous and barren sides affects us as sublime; while the same height which should arise with gradual undulations, and should be clothed with verdure, might strike us as simply beautiful. The uninterrupted

waste of the sea may be sublime; but where it is strewn with islands covered with grass or foliage it may be beautiful. In sublimity the face of nature meets us with blank sternness; in beauty it breaks into smiles. Thus, among the followers of Hegel, Solger defines sublimity as "Beauty in the making"; and Vischer affirms the sublime and the comic to be the differentiated elements of which beauty consists; the one being the universal apart from the individual; the other the individual emptied of the universal.

The theories of Kant and Hegel in regard to the sublime are the most important and interesting that have been offered on this theme. They, however, by no means stand alone. A multitude of others grow out from them, or twine about them, or have sprung up in their shadow. Dr. Arthur Seidl has recently brought them together in an interesting monograph.<sup>1</sup> They are mostly, as Seidl intimates, formed to suit the exigencies of some general system in which they have their place. Even including the theories of Kant and, to some extent, that of Hegel, I confess that they seem to

<sup>1</sup> *Zur Geschichte des Erhabenkeitsbegriffes seit Kant.* Leipzig, 1889.

me for the most part creations of the study, rather than open-air growths springing out of the facts of experience.

I propose to consider certain assumptions which are made in so many of these systems, including those that we have examined, that they seem to pass for commonplaces.

A position that is very generally taken is that the sense of the sublime is produced by a suggestion of the infinite. Even Seidl, the latest writer upon this theme, insists upon this. I confess I do not quite know what is meant by this suggestion of the infinite of which we hear so much in various relations. Max Müller and others insist that all religions, the lower as well as the higher, are the results simply of a sense of the infinite. So here the sublime involves the idea of the infinite. In both cases the use of the term needs explanation. If it means that in connection with the sublime, or in religion, man loses the sense of limit, whether this is true or false, it is something different from a positive sense of infinitude. The bird, the beast, and the child have no sense of the limit of life. The bird and the beast have no knowledge of such a limit, and the child has no thought of it and no belief in it.



This, however, is very different from a consciousness of infinitude. In point of fact, the idea of infinitude would seem to be a very late product of the human mind; and I conceive that there can be no sense of the infinite before this idea has been more or less consciously reached. Even after the idea of the infinite has been reached, I conceive that neither it nor the undefined sense of it is often present to the soul, even in the case of religion. The minds of men deal with the concrete. They deal with the undetermined, it is true. This may produce the sense of a vague vastness, but this is not the infinite. Even though one may be shocked by the thought of a limit, it does not follow that one has had the sense of the unlimited. That the feeling and the thought of the infinite may sometimes be suggested by the sublime object cannot be doubted. This may be, for instance, the case when the limit of this object is beyond our vision as well as beyond our apprehension. This is the case sometimes in the vision of the ocean or the sky. We see no boundary, and the actual limit is too far away for our distinct apprehension. The thought is thus tempted to a quest that seems endless.



A misapprehension that is bound up with the one just named is that the sense of sublimity is, more than that of beauty, the result of reflection. When it is produced by the thought of the infinite it is obviously the product of reflection. From this point of view, a man's recognition of the sublime will be limited only by his power of insight and association. There is nothing so humble that it may not become the expression of sublimity. To Tennyson the "flower in the crannied wall" is sublime, for it represents the universe. Wordsworth could exclaim : —

"To me the meanest flower that blows can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

The effect of sublimity may, however, be as direct as that of beauty. The sublime object may check thought instead of inspiring it. The very word "stupendous" illustrates this aspect of the case. The spirit may rest lost in the grandeur of the object of its contemplation.

Another point in which there seems to me to have been a frequent misapprehension is the relation between sublimity and beauty. It has been commonly assumed that when

an object is sublime it is no longer beautiful. Thus definitions have been sought that should sharply discriminate the one from the other. I conceive that the sublime object is as often, perhaps more often, at the same time beautiful. It may under certain circumstances be terrible as well as beautiful. The tiger is none the less beautiful because it is terrible.

To understand the relation between the sublime and the beautiful we need to consider for a moment what it is that constitutes beauty. Without making an analysis of the matter, it may be stated that beauty is the manifestation of the ideal in the real. Thus we have about us the general life of nature; we have this life as it concentrates itself in individual forms; we have the higher manifestation of it in spiritual ideals. Without dwelling upon this matter, which cannot here be adequately discussed, we need merely notice that the manifestation of the forces of nature which cause the sense of sublimity belongs to this general scheme.

Beauty and sublimity may be classed together under both a general and a special aspect. In the first place, they are both forms of contemplation. In the second

place, this contemplation is accompanied by a delight in which there is no reference to self. In beauty self may be simply forgotten. In sublimity it may be set at naught. In beauty we have such sympathy with nature that we rejoice in its free life as if it were our own. In sublimity we rejoice in the might and vastness of the outward world as if it were our own. I use here the term outward world in its largest significance, and include all objects of contemplation, the spiritual as well as the material.

The common assumption that when an object is sublime it cannot be beautiful rests upon the notion that certain conditions are essential to sublimity which are fatal to beauty. These conditions are most often expressed in the saying that beauty requires form, while sublimity is best manifested in the formless. According to Kant, chaos would be the highest exhibition of the sublime. The word "form" as used in this connection has sometimes been misunderstood. Even Vischer urges that everything has form. "The hippopotamus has a form, but what a form it is!" By form is meant a proportion among the various parts that permits them to be taken together as a unity in

which the ideal that the object represents is distinctly manifested. The hippopotamus is formless in the sense that in it the unity of life is not distinctly manifested as in, for instance, the antelope. The reason that the formless has been regarded as the best medium of sublimity is the fact that it is difficult to realize the vastness of a structure, all the parts of which are perfectly proportioned to one another. Many have thus expressed disappointment at the first impression produced by the basilica of St. Peter at Rome, and by Niagara Falls. So far as the Basilica is concerned, many doubtless leave it with no real sense of its immensity. When, however, by closer study one has come to feel some sense of the actual vastness of the pile, the perfection of its form does not at all lessen the recognition of its sublimity. In my first visit to Rome as a youth I reached this impression in a manner hardly compatible with the conventional dignity of more mature years, namely, by lying on my back on the pavement and gazing up into the dome. As I gazed it expanded and soared, till I had some real sense, however imperfect, of its magnitude.

A yet more intense feeling of the same

kind has been doubtless produced in most by lying and looking up into the sky. In this case the effect is deepened, not merely by the immeasurably greater breadth and height of the object contemplated, but also by the fact that the sky does not seem, like the dome of the temple, a solid arch, but it tempts the eye to penetrate it.

It is thus true that a certain formlessness or disproportion makes the sense of sublimity more easy to be reached. We see this in the play of the mighty forces of nature. We see it in abrupt and jagged precipices, and in the terrible might of the tempest. The same is true in life. It is easier to feel the power that shows itself in destruction than that which shows itself in construction. Men stand more in awe of Julius Cæsar who raged through the earth, conquering every foe that rose against him, than of Augustus, who reared the magnificent structure of the Roman Empire. Only by careful thought and observation, like those which make us feel the stupendous nature of St. Peter's, can we realize that the career of Augustus Cæsar is one of the most sublime that the world has seen. In like manner it is more easy to feel the sublimity of a partial, than of a com-

plete, nature; of sin than of virtue. Byron impresses the superficial imagination as nearer sublimity than Wordsworth, the Satan of Milton as more sublime than his Deity.

The same distinction meets us in literature. In the "Paracelsus" of Browning we have in Paracelsus and Aprile the two halves of an ideal humanity. Paracelsus, who would know and only know, looms vaster than human through this very imperfection. In the same poem we have vast and vague the personification of the human race, as it gradually awakens to full consciousness and strength:—

" O long ago

The brow was twitched, the tremulous lids astir,  
The peaceful mouth disturbed; half uttered speech  
Ruffled the lip, and then the teeth were set,  
The breath drawn sharp, the strong right hand clenched  
stronger,  
As it would pluck a lion by the jaw;  
The glorious creature laughed out even in sleep!  
But when full roused, each giant-limb awake,  
Each sinew strung, the great heart pulsing fast,  
He shall start up and stand on his own earth,  
Thence shall his being date, — thus wholly roused,  
What he achieves shall be set down to him."

The rude strength of Michael Angelo produces an effect of sublimity that could hardly

be reached by more delicately finished work. Longfellow's poem on "The Lighthouse" affords a striking example of the effect that may be produced by a few strong touches and the omission of all minor details, when the object that is represented is in itself sublime. Especially is this effect seen in the second of the two following lines:—

"The sea-bird wheeling round it, with the din  
Of wings and winds and solitary cries."

We may thus understand the effect of obscurity in heightening the sense of sublimity. In a vast cathedral, where all the details are visible in the light of the morning, the effect of sublimity is much less felt than in the dimness of the closing day, when the arches seem to soar the loftier because their outline shows itself apart from the lighter ornamentation that somewhat lessens their effect. The sea, also, seems sometimes more sublime in the night, when we can only hear the rote of the surf, than it did when it stretched before us in the broad light of day. When its wider expanse is hidden by a mist, and we can see only the line of waves breaking upon the beach, it seems often more sublime than when the sight can follow

it to the horizon's edge. The Jungfrau mountain is never so sublime as when its base and its flanks are wrapped with clouds, and the summit alone is seen, looking down upon us almost from the mid-heaven.

It will be noticed that while a certain vagueness may sometimes make the sublime easier of apprehension, this vagueness must always exist in connection with something clearly defined. The imagination always needs a definite stimulus. It is sometimes forgotten that there cannot be even mystery without knowledge. The clearer the knowledge the deeper the mystery which it suggests. The same must be true of that sublimity which springs from mystery. We thus may understand something of the power of music to aid in the production of sublime effects. It is on the one side so sharply defined, and on the other so vague and boundless, that it may easily produce an impression of sublimity. It is especially fitted to assist in the production of a feeling of the supernatural, of the presence of something which the imagination cannot picture. In saying this I have had in mind its use in one of Wagner's operas, for instance; or in any case where the supernatural content is



vaguely suggested. A like effect may, however, sometimes be produced by the music itself with no suggestion from without, as sometimes in a symphony.

I have wished thus to do justice to the truth there is in the theories that make the formless and the vague elements of the sublime. Under certain circumstances they do make the apprehension of the sublime more easy. They are, however, not the essential conditions of it; and it is, I conceive, wholly a mistake to find in these a distinction between beauty and sublimity. In the first place, the beautiful may be as formless as the sublime. How charming is some mountain cataract with the spray blown into irregular and changing shapes at its feet! How wilfully the brook plays along its course!—

“ I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance  
 Among my skimming swallows;  
 I make the netted sunbeams dance  
 Against my sandy shallows.”

Thus does Tennyson interpret the music of the brook; and the very waywardness and formlessness create its charm.

In the second place the sublime is often, I am inclined to think most often, beautiful.

We may take what examples we will, and we find sublimity continually clothing itself in beauty. What could be more sublime, and what could be more beautiful, than the snow mountains of Switzerland? Shall we call the Falls of Niagara sublime or beautiful? Certainly they are both. If there is sublimity anywhere it is there; and yet one often feels the supreme beauty more than the sublimity. Even when one stands at the very foot of the falls by the Cave of the Winds, and is lashed by their spray, and deafened by their roar, even then one feels no less their ethereal beauty; and the circling rainbow in the centre of which one stands seems the natural interpreter of the whole. Never did I feel the sublime to be more beautiful than at my first vision of these falls. It was in the evening, and guided simply by their roar I found myself suddenly looking down upon them. Below, the depths were black in the night, except for the glory of the whiteness and sparkle of the descending waters, while over them hovered a perfect lunar rainbow. In such a presence the beauty adds to the sublimity. The plunging mass of white foam and spray seems so ethereal in its loveliness that we feel all

the more the terrible might of the waters thundering in their fall.

The sense of beauty, as we have seen, springs from our delight in the freedom and perfection of nature; that of sublimity arises from our joy in the freedom and perfection of its strength. The double feeling, that of pain and joy, united or following one another, which is so generally referred to in the discussions of this theme, arises, when it exists, from our sense of the contrast between our insignificance and the strength and the vastness with which we are surrounded. This contrast is most strongly marked where there is some sense of peril, where, as in the case already referred to, one is upon a vessel that seems but a mere shell among the waves which are carrying on their wild sport about it and beneath it. As the boat that seems so little and fragile rises and sinks, rolls and pitches, one may give way to terror. The sense of beauty may, however, be stronger than the terror. One may rejoice in the joy of the elements. To one who has risen above the sense of personal peril, the sea, even at its wildest, is beautiful. It is only our terror that speaks of the angry waters, or can call them, as Kant does, horrible.

The strength of the sea, if giving up all thought of danger and safety we put any human emotion into it, can be considered only as a glad strength. In the exaltation which the sense of sublimity brings we enter into this joy. Similar to this is, in all other cases, our relation to the sublime. It may not be physical peril that moves us, the fear of being actually lost and swallowed up among the forces of nature. It may be the sense more or less distinct of the insignificance of our individuality in the presence of the stupendousness of nature. The individual shrinks to nothingness in the comparison. This loss of self-importance naturally is often accompanied by an inward protest. The individual naturally may shrink from suffering himself to be thus lost in the vastness of the universe. Some are unable to get beyond this shrinking which may even assume the form of a vague terror. Where the sense of sublimity is truly felt, however, this shrinking is overcome. It is replaced or accompanied by a joy and an exaltation. To some minds this joy comes without the struggle, though even in this case there is the sense, however little it may be developed into consciousness, of the measureless dis-

parity of which I have spoken. This joy may arise from various aspects of the relation. The sense of the infinite may be aroused as the philosophers have so often affirmed. There may come, according to the opinion of Kant, a sense of spiritual immensities to which the material immensity is as nothing. Primarily, however, and most simply it is, as it appears on its face, a delight in the manifestation of nature, especially when the measureless force that awes us has clothed itself, as it so often does, in the garment of beauty. We find a like relation, which is easier to understand, in the veneration which is felt towards some noble character. In such veneration there is also the element of awe, but this awe is itself a pleasure, for it introduces us to the contemplation of virtue or genius, delighting in which we forget our own limitations; or else we feel that this superiority to ourselves is the most natural thing in the world, and we glory in this transcending excellence. The philosophers have for the most part been unwilling to believe that there could be anything in nature to excite an awe like this. Explain it as we will, or leave it unexplained, nature does have this power over us. We

may say, as I have said, that we have such sympathy with nature that we rejoice in its power and beauty as if they were our own. We may say, perhaps more truly, that it is a sense of the divine life in the world that is about us. However we may explain it, it is the giving up of ourselves to a larger life. This may, indeed, take the form of cynicism, as it does sometimes in the poems of Byron, who seems to rejoice in the littleness of human nature in its pitiful contrast with the sublimities of the external world. In this case, the spirit of the cynic has transcended itself and made itself one with the stupendousness of nature. More often, however, it is the simple, natural, surrender of one's self to that which is unspeakably vaster, and more magnificent. In this mingled awe and exaltation we have one of the most beautiful manifestations of human nature. This self-surrender is in the æsthetic world what self-denial is in the moral world. The experience is in itself a healthful one. There are persons so full of conceit or of self-consciousness that a moment of self-forgetfulness in the joy of what is infinitely above and beyond them would bring, we can but think, a new element of peace and strength into their lives.

Goethe exclaims through the lips of Faust, —

“Das Schaudern ist der Menschheit bestes Theil.”

When Faust said these words he was on the point of descending to the awful presence of the “mothers,” to the region of the formless out from which all forms proceed. The shudder that he felt was the awe of sublimity. We may place the possibility of this at least among the best elements of humanity. It implies the possibility of a sense of that which infinitely transcends our little human lives, and a joy in this transcendence. It implies the possibility of giving up our self-importance and of a childlike delight in that which is larger and stronger, or in any way more worthy, than ourselves.





SPENCER'S RECONCILIATION OF  
SCIENCE AND RELIGION



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THE works of Herbert Spencer exhibit the latest form of the positive philosophy, and foreshadow its future development. Reverent and bold, — reverent for truth, though not for the forms of truth, and not for much that we hold true, — bold in the destruction of error, though without that joy in destruction which often claims the name of boldness, — these works are interesting in themselves and in their relation to the earnest thought of the time. They seem at the first sight to form the turning-point in the positive philosophy ; but closer examination shows us that it is only a new and marked stage in a regular growth. It is the positive philosophy reaching the higher realities of our being, and establishing what before it ignored, because it had not reached, and by ignoring seemed to destroy. This system formerly excluded theology and pure psychology. In the works of Spencer we have the rudiments of a positive theology, and an

immense step towards the perfection of the science of psychology.

In witnessing the increasing violence of any destructive power, it is hard to free ourselves from a certain shrinking terror, even if we know that there are barriers which this power cannot pass. When the tempest drives the flowing tide, with what seems irresistible might, against the shore, it is hard to keep wholly free from dread, even though we know that the "Thus far and no farther" has been written by the hand of God on the eternal rocks. So, many clear heads and trusting hearts felt a certain unacknowledged terror in the presence of that philosophy which seemed sweeping away what was dearest to their faith, even while they knew the limits which bound it.

Before considering the relation which the works of Spencer bear to our religious thought, let us look for a moment at those limitations which were imposed upon this positive philosophy by its very nature. We will not speak of the most obvious and real of these,—the fact that it left out of the account one whole department of our being, for this would be to assume the whole question. An argument drawn from this

would affect only the man of religious faith, and it would affect him only so far as his faith was strong; that is, it would be strongest when it was least needed. The positive philosophy, positive towards the sciences, was merely negative towards theology. It did not directly attack it. It only tried to crowd it out. It attempted to do this in two ways: first, historically; secondly, demonstratively. The historical method was this. It showed how every science had passed through the three stages of theological, metaphysical, and positive. The first of these stages was still further subdivided into the periods of Fetichism, Polytheism, and Monotheism. All the sciences had passed through these forms except the new and incomplete science of sociology. The direct hand of God was acknowledged only in our human life, and, as it had been excluded from every other sphere, the inference was unavoidable that it would be from this. But to make the inference from it valid, these changes should have been complete and radical. If it is seen that each of these was only a matter of degree, that it was a right principle too far extended, then the inference is without logical foundation. Even

Fetichism was only such an undue extension. Fetichism was simply ascribing to all the objects in nature what was due to some of them, viz. consciousness and volition akin to those of the beholder. The savage had not drawn the line between the animate and the inanimate. We still apply the principle of Fetichism to men and to animals. Still further, our most accurate science has hardly yet drawn the line where Fetichism should cease, that is, where animal life ends, and vegetable begins. The principle, then, is only modified and limited, not abandoned. It is sufficient to show this in regard to the first of this series of changes, to expose the fallacy of the argument drawn from them. Had we space, however, the process could be continued in regard to the others. What was essential in Polytheism is retained by the monotheistic Trinitarianism, and no profound Monotheism can long be free from some form of Trinitarianism. Enough has been shown, however, to prove that these changes are merely limitations and modifications, and these can never pass into destruction and annihilation. Least of all could this destruction be argued from them.

A similar fallacy is found in the other

method of crowding religion out of the world. This method is, by showing the presence of law everywhere, and the absence of all arbitrariness, to leave no place for the Divine will. But the same system, when it comes to speak of the human will, makes that regular and subject to law. If it seem capricious, it is only because the circumstances about it change. If this be so, then this regularity in the world is what we should expect from the working of an absolute will, which was master of its circumstances. The account that the positive philosophy gives of the world just fits the conception which it gives of will, and gives us just such a world as we should expect from a supreme will, as it defines will.

Many persons conceive of fallacies in a system as places to be attacked, just as a boy imagines the eyes of the cocoa-nut to be designed by nature as weak spots for the insertion of his gimlet. Both overlook the great principle of germination.

If any system have real vitality in it, its points of weakness are its points of growth. It cannot be destroyed from without; but by the process of its own nature it will itself break through its limitations, and transform

itself into a more perfect form, or at least into one that shall supply what it before lacked. What we should expect from these points of germination in the positive philosophy would be, then, a theology so modified as to be free from all arbitrariness and caprice. In the works of Spencer we have indications of the beginning of this process. In the system of philosophy of which Mr. Spencer has commenced the serial publication, we have first, under the heading of "First Principles," two divisions, viz. Part First, "The Unknowable," and Part Second, "Laws of the Knowable." It is with the first of these parts that we concern ourselves at present. In this he brings together the ultimate facts of science and religion. He takes up three forms of religious thought, the atheistic, the pantheistic, and one form of the theistic, and shows that each is inconceivable, and therefore idle. He then takes up, in like manner, the ultimate scientific ideas, such as space, time, and force, and shows that these are, in like manner, inconceivable, and consequently unknowable. He has thus shown that both religious thought and scientific thought lose themselves, if we trace them back far enough, in mystery.



And when at last he seeks a reconciliation of the two, he finds it in this mystery, which is common to both. The mysteriousness of these ultimate facts is the one thing in common between all forms of religion, and between these and science. Yet it is not all mystery or uncertainty in either. The solid, central ground is the certainty of one omnipresent and incomprehensible power. We give the statement of this very important result in the words of the author.

“We are obliged to regard every phenomenon as a manifestation of some power, by which we are acted upon ; phenomena being, so far as we can ascertain, unlimited on their diffusion, we are obliged to regard this power as omnipresent ; and criticism teaches us that this power is wholly incomprehensible. In this consciousness of an incomprehensible, omnipresent power, we have just the consciousness on which religion dwells. And so we arrive at the point where religion and science coalesce.”

Such is a brief and meagre sketch of a discussion which we would commend to be followed in detail by every mind interested in theological study. Herbert Spencer comes, in good faith, from what has been so long a

hostile camp, bringing a flag of truce and proposing terms of agreement meant to be honorable to both parties. Let us give him a candid hearing, and perhaps the terms he offers, though we may not accept them in their first and full form, may lead to a better understanding, and open the way to a final adjustment. In suggesting a few thoughts designed to help forward this result, we shall avoid all mere verbal criticism; we shall resist the temptation to expose inconsistencies inevitable to a transition state, and shall confine ourselves to the broadest principles involved in the discussion.

Our first criticism is, that Spencer looks upon theology, or tries to do so, too much from the theological standpoint. He confuses the subject by bringing in discussions which belong to theology, and with which positivism has nothing to do. It is like Lord Lyons interpreting the Constitution of the United States to Mr. Seward. Even with the distinctions of Atheism, Pantheism, and Theism, the positivist, as such, has nothing to do. He can, if we may be allowed the paradox, conceive of Theism only under the form of Atheism; that is to say, he must look at the whole circle of

being as complete in itself, with nothing outside of it. If to this chain of causes there be a first cause, this must be taken with the rest as forming the sum of what is. The existence of God does not explain existence. It presupposes it. Even if this first cause be all-pervading and all-efficient, if it be the working power in each subordinate cause, — whether it be a part of the whole, or whether it be the whole of which the others are parts, — with them it makes up the sum of that which is. And that which is, a self-completing and self-sufficient circle, with nothing outside of it, is that with which the positivist has to do. The theology he has, if he have any, must be his own, and reached in his own way. The giving up of these cumbering remains of old discussions will lighten the whole controversy.

Our next point of objection is, that the terms of compromise he proposes are dishonorable to both parties, no less so to science than to theology. They are so because they do not involve the results achieved by either.

To illustrate clearly the method of reconciliation proposed, we will quote somewhat in detail.

“We have to discover some fundamental verity which religion will assert, with all possible emphasis, in the absence of science, and which science, with all possible emphasis, will assert in the absence of religion, — some fundamental verity in the defence of which each will find the other its ally.

“Or, changing the point of view, our aim must be to co-ordinate the seemingly opposed convictions which religion and science embody. From the coalescence of antagonist ideas, each containing its portion of truth, there always arises a higher development. As in geology, when the igneous and aqueous hypotheses were united, a rapid advance took place; as in biology we are beginning to progress through the fusion of the doctrine of types with the doctrine of adaptation; as in psychology the arrested growth recommences, now that the disciples of Kant and those of Locke have both their views recognized in the theory that organized experiences produce forms of thought; as in sociology now that it is beginning to assume a positive character, we find a recognition of both the party of progress and the party of order as each holding a truth, which forms a needful complement to that held by the other; — so must it be, on a grander scale, with religion and science. To understand how science and religion express opposite sides of the same fact, — the one its near or visible side, and the other its remote or invisible side, — this is what we must attempt, and to achieve this

we must profoundly modify our general theory of things. . . .

“We have found *a priori* reason for believing that in all religions, even the rudest, there lies a hidden, a fundamental verity. We have inferred that this fundamental verity is that element common to all religions, which remains after their discordant peculiarities have been mutually cancelled. And we have further inferred, that this element is almost certain to be more abstract than any current religious doctrine. Now, it is manifest that only in some highly abstract proposition can religion and science find a common ground. Neither such dogmas as those of the Trinitarian and Unitarian, nor any such idea as that of propitiation, common though it may be to all religions, can serve as the desired basis of agreement; for science cannot recognize beliefs like these: they lie beyond its sphere. Hence we see, not only that, judging by analogy, the essential truth contained in religion is that most abstract element pervading all its forms; but also that this most abstract element is the only one in which religion is likely to agree with science.”

We can hardly understand how the portion of our quotation which follows the dots that take the place of an omitted paragraph should have been written by the same hand that wrote that which precedes them. Sup-

pose the principle of compromise, suggested in the close of our extract, be applied to the controversies referred to at the beginning. The abstract truth common to the igneous and aqueous theories is, that the geological structure of the world was produced somehow. The truth held in common by the disciples of Kant and those of Locke would be that men had ideas. On the contrary, each of the compromises referred to by him were reached by the tenacity with which each side maintained its own convictions to the last. The Neptunian maintained the action of water, the Vulcanian that of fire, till the agency of both was at last admitted. The disciple of Kant maintained that men were born with certain forms of thought. The disciples of Locke maintained that all thoughts and all forms of thought were the result of experience. The higher ground referred to by Spencer is the ingenious theory, that individual men are born with forms of thought, the result of the accumulated and embodied experience of the race. Not what is most abstract, but what is most concrete, in each of the opposing doctrines, is the basis of the final and harmonious adjustment. In like manner, if religion

and science ever coalesce, this result will be brought about by the steadfastness with which each insists on what is most peculiar to itself. Theology must maintain its highest intuitions; science must maintain the rigid accuracy of its own methods. Spencer, in the result he has reached, does more to help forward this adjustment than by the basis he proposes. When he gives us, as the infallible demonstration of science, that all phenomena are the result of one absolute and omnipresent power, we see the first step in the process of reconciliation. Science will demonstrate the fundamental truths of religion, while the extravagances of theology will be corrected, and its confusion made clear, by the same process.

Let us look more closely at the ground thus reached. What is there in the results of positive science that should lead to the undoubting statement of Spencer, and that should lead still further to the advance just suggested? Positive science discloses the unity and the development of the world. It subordinates all laws to one law, and this one law is seen more and more to be that of development, of progress. The formula of this development is found to be the same at

every stage, namely, progression by differentiation and integration. The result is the same as when Newton found that the same mathematical formula would express the motion of the planets and that of an apple falling to the earth. He saw, and the world saw, that this common result must be produced by one and the same cause. This was only one step in the demonstration by which science has shown, and is showing, the world and the universe to be a unity, and if a unity, then the inference is unavoidable, that all its phenomena must be the result of one and the same power. The principle of progress or development by itself explains nothing, but points unmistakably in the same direction. Development is a constant creation. If it is a creative act to produce man out of the dust of the earth in a moment, it is no less a creative act to produce him out of a nebulous mist, in myriads of years. Nay, it is no less a creative act to produce the human race, should it ever be brought to this, out of the race of baboons. For this would involve, unless our estimate of humanity be exaggerated, the production of faculties and powers which before had no existence. We wish to commit ourselves to



no theory, but only to show that the most extreme theories, so far as they affect the theological argument at all, only make it stronger. To trace back this grand procession to a nebulous mass, and call this its cause, would be as if one should trace back a bubble to a few drops of soap and water in the bowl of a pipe, and call these its cause. Trace the universe back, if you can, to this nebulous mass; then we see more clearly than ever before that there is need of the inspiring breath of God to give this shapeless mass form and beauty, to breathe into it the spirit of life, of understanding, and of love. The formula according to which this development takes place, the conditions under which it takes place, cannot be its cause. Differentiation and integration show the method, but presuppose the power, of advance. To attempt to explain this constant advance by these alone would be to explain the passage of water through a bed of clay by saying that first the water softened the clay, and then washed it off, then softened more, and washed that away. This explains well enough the method, but presupposes the force which was urging the water on. This unity of the world, presupposing unity in its cause, and this

constant progress in the world, presupposing the constant action of this causing power, were undoubtedly the facts which forced Spencer, as they must, when they become more clearly recognized, force all thinking minds, to the recognition of the one absolute and omnipresent power. But can the thought rest here? Do these constant effects give no hint of the nature of the cause? There are further steps which must be taken. Spencer himself gives some hint of, as well as makes preparation for, the next. In speaking of those who hold fast to the popular conception of God, he says, that they "make the erroneous assumption that the choice is between personality and something lower than personality; whereas the choice is rather between personality and something higher. Is it not just possible that there is a mode of being as much transcending intelligence and will as these transcend mechanical motion?"

If we compare the "Is it not possible" of Spencer with the "must be" of Parker, we shall see how near this Positivism is to a positive Theism. The relation of the results of Spencer to the religious sentiment may be best seen by reading, in connection with his

works, Miss Hennell's very interesting and earnest volume, entitled "Thoughts in Aid of Faith." This book seems to have been suggested by Spencer's writings. It certainly occupies the same standpoint, and presents the same results, under the form of sentiment. It shows how emotional religion fills out every channel that is opened for it; and how far such a channel is opened by Positivism.

One of the greatest points of difference between the modern philosophy and that which came before it is, that the modern places an impassable gulf between cause and effect. The effect, it is maintained, gives no idea of the cause. Mill, in his *Logic*, ridicules the assumption that there can be nothing in the effect which is not in the cause, by the deduction that, if there be pepper in the soup, the cook that made it must have been peppery; which suggests, and was probably suggested by, the familiar parody, "Who drives fat oxen must himself be fat." It is true that such reasoning may be carried too far. An efficient cause, in general, simply sets in motion the properties of the object acted on, and its results are varied by these properties. A spark is the

same, whether it be produced by friction, fire, or chemical action. On the other hand, its effects vary, according as it falls on powder, tinder, water, ice, or dough. But it is also true, that the material of the effect can be nothing but the material of that cause which supplied the material. The *causa materialis* is revealed by the effect. Moreover, when there is any final cause, this is revealed in the effect. Leaving out of the account all scholastic distinctions, and not aiming at strict scientific accuracy, we may say that causes are of two sorts,—those which set in action the latent powers of other substances, and those which furnish themselves the substance of the new effect. Physicians express this distinction very simply when they speak of the exciting and predisposing causes of disease. Now an absolute cause furnishes everything. It is at once the efficient, material, formal, and final cause. Its action is not limited by other substances, for there are no other. It is not qualified by the material on which it works, for it supplies this substance. We could not say whether the form of its action is imposed by itself from without, or whether it results from the nature of the substance

acted upon, for subject and object are one. Moreover, there being nothing to impede or check, the end reached must be the end proposed. Consequently, the results produced by an absolute cause must be in some degree the revelation of the cause.

The same is true, notwithstanding the admissions made above, of every cause, however limited. For how can a cause be defined, except by its effects? The nature of a cause is to produce such and such effects. It is the nature of fire to produce light, to melt ice, to burn combustible matter. We define a cause, then, when we say what it has done, what it might do, and what it will do. All that we know of anything is, that it is the cause of certain effects, and the result of certain causes. Of the absolute cause we know, and can know, only the first. Of this we know, that it produces thought, it sustains thought, guides thought, and, by impelling thought towards itself, makes itself the end of thought. We know that it causes love, maintains love, guides love, and, by directing love towards itself, makes itself the object of love. This the positivist must affirm, and if he affirms this, it is, for practical purposes, very much as if he affirmed,

with Jesus, that God is spirit, and with John, that God is love. This same cause produces also sorrow and suffering. But, so far as we can see, we perceive these to be only means for an end, which is the opposite of these. And however it may be with these, it must remain true that the most complete and highest results of a cause are the truest revelation of it. This is evident from what we have said of the nature of the definition of a cause. These highest results show most perfectly what it is the nature of the cause to effect. If we wish to form a conception of the force of attraction, we should not think of reckoning the power that it takes to draw a pebble to the earth, but that which is needed to hold the universe together. The universe is, so far as we know, unlimited. If it were unlimited, we know that this power of attraction would hold the whole together, because each new world adds to this power. Thus, to form an estimate of the power of attraction, we should have to think of unlimited, that is infinite force. This we can do, and in this we can believe, though it be inconceivable. In like manner, to form a thought of the absolute cause of all, we must take what we are forced to recognize as its

highest results, and make these our measure. These results are spiritual. They are Thought and Love, which are the highest attributes of spirit. These, then, form the best revelation that we have of the absolute cause. These are imperfect, but not therefore false in their revelation. An absolute cause must reveal itself, more or less, at every step. At every step the highest result reached is the best revelation. Suppose, at each stage in creation, the world to have a certain consciousness, by which it knows that it is the product of one power, and seeks to discover from itself the nature of that power. The bare and barren worlds of unmeasured vastness, stretching through immeasurable space, would find in themselves the revelation of might only, of the vastness of the power that caused them. Attraction is pure, unqualified power. The world of plants, the result of the teeming fertility of the primeval worlds, would recognize life as the truest revelation of the first cause, because life is the highest that had yet been reached. In the same way, passing over intermediate stages, we, in whom life has become thought, love, spirit, recognize these as the truest revelation. What further



is to come we cannot say; but as, from our own standpoint, we can see how the revelation in worlds and in plants was true, though imperfect, so the revelation in us, while it is imperfect, is yet true. No one has done more to illustrate this point than Herbert Spencer, though what he has done has been without this intention. By showing how all forms of life, with all forms of thought, as well as all forms of progress, may be summed up under one formula, he shows how what is true at one stage, though imperfect, must be true at all stages, and must remain so forever.

In the same manner he illustrates the right that we have to accept as absolutely real what is only relatively so. He says:—

“Thus we may resume with entire confidence those realistic conceptions which philosophy at first sight seems to dissipate. Though reality, under the forms of our consciousness, is but a conditioned effect of the absolute reality, yet this conditioned effect, standing in indissoluble relation with its unconditioned cause, and being equally persistent with it, so long as the conditions persist, is, to the consciousness supplying those conditions, equally real. The persistent impressions, being the persistent results of a persistent cause, are for practical



purposes the same to us as the cause itself, and may be habitually dealt with as its equivalents. Somewhat in the same way that our visual perceptions, though merely symbols, found to be the equivalents of tactual perceptions, are yet so identified with those tactual perceptions that we actually appear to see the solidity and hardness which we do but infer, and thus conceive as objects what are only the signs of objects; so, on a higher stage, do we deal with those relative realities as though they were absolutes instead of effects of the absolute. And we may legitimately continue so to deal with them as long as the conclusions to which they help us are understood as relative realities, and not absolute ones."

This he says of such realities as time, space, motion, force, etc. The same remarks would apply equally to higher realities. If we find the presence of mind and thought in the world, or the results of a power, which is practically the same as mind and thought; if this always has been so, and always will be so, we are right in regarding this power as mind and thought, even though it should be higher than, and in some respects different from, and not at all to be measured by, our mind and our thought. If the positive philosophy affirms it in one case and not

in the other, it is because this system is thoroughly treating the lower realities, and just approaching the higher.

In the reasoning which we have used, we have constantly spoken of some realities and results as higher than others. The end we have reached depends upon this distinction. This is a point where the positive philosophy is apparently most at issue with the religious, — which is here identical with the common sense of mankind. Spencer thus writes, in speaking of the correlation and equivalents of forces in the fourth number of his work.

“Many who admit that, among physical phenomena at least, the correlation of forces is now established, will probably say that inquiry has not yet gone far enough to enable us to predicate equivalence. And in respect of the forces classed as vital, mental, and social, the evidence assigned, however little to be explained away, they will consider by no means conclusive even of correlation, much less of equivalence. To those who think thus, it must now, however, be pointed out that the universal truth above illustrated, under its various aspects, is a necessary corollary from the persistence of force. Setting out with the proposition that force can neither come into existence nor cease to exist, the several foregoing conclusions

inevitably follow. . . . Either mental energies, as well as bodily ones, are quantitatively correlated to certain energies expended in their production, and to certain other energies which they initiate; or else nothing must become something, or something must become nothing."

We here meet, though somewhat vaguely, the great point of difference between the merely scientific and the theological point of view. The common and abiding sense of all men is with the latter. Life and thought are not mere equivalents of their material conditions, unless so far as some power may have been latent in the physical conditions imparted to them from something behind and higher than themselves. The life of mere sensualism is lower than the intellectual life. An evil life is lower than a moral life. This the human sense always will maintain. A man stands higher than a brute. The further our knowledge advances, the more do we feel the difference between the crime of killing a man, and killing a brute, or thousands of brutes. All the pre-Adamite beasts and reptiles together were not the equivalent of a single human being. Science cannot persuade men out of this; though we may admit to science the possible presence of a

latent, imparted force in the lower forms of being. We may illustrate this by the familiar experiment of the ivory balls. A blow struck on the first reveals itself in the motion of the last. The force is latent in the intermediate ones ; so a human spirit may perhaps be regarded as the last of a series, which first reveals the power imparted to the whole. A better illustration would be that of a child. The child is not the equivalent of the man it is to become, yet there is imparted to it, from the parent, the impulse of growth, which growth is carried on by means of absorption from the outward world. The man, not the child, is the true image of the parent. So the universe may be regarded as at first the unconscious child of the first cause. This absolute cause stands to it in the place both of parent and permanent condition. It gives it the first impulse as parent, and imparts to it, when it needs, new life, as the constantly present condition of its growth. It is thus both father and mother, both imparting and sustaining this growing life. Thus does the universe, the child of God, grow from its first unconsciousness up into the more and more perfect image of its cause, until man comes, "made

in God's image," and humanity by slow degrees develops this godlikeness.

We have thus shown how science, proving the unity that reigns through the universe, demonstrates that it is the result of one power, and further how this is only one step of a process that cannot rest, by which the results of this one power must be seen to be, in some degree, the revelation of it. We will now look, very briefly, at some of the results of this demonstration.

The first result will be, that, as science demonstrates, step by step, the truths of religion, they will become universal and undoubted. The results of science, when they have become really established, are always so. All men have powers and intuitions by which they might discern God, but these intuitions are obscured by lack of culture and by sin. Men like undoubted, unquestionable authority. The authority of the Church is broken into manifold fragments. In the times of the mediæval Church, there seems to have been little real unbelief. The worst men seem to have been superstitious. This was because the learned united to uphold the fundamental doctrines of the Church. Science is beginning a

demonstration that shall again make religious truth as universal and as undoubted as the fact that the earth moves round the sun. We shall have the old unanimity, but it will rest on a stronger basis.

The same scientific process will throw light on many other points. Thus, we unite in believing that religion teaches goodness. What shall a man do to be good? Moral science and political economy are sciences exact as any other, and these will teach us, as they are rightly understood, what objective goodness really is. We all agree in the belief in God's justice and providence. But how hard it is to reconcile justice and mercy! How hard to understand the connection between special and general providences! The science of history will show us God's actual dealings with men, — what justice and providence mean in this world. The soul not only needs light and knowledge, but it needs also the awe of mystery. For mystery, the Church gives us mysteries. For that great mystery which fills the soul with awe, it gives us riddles which we cannot guess. Science gives us true mystery. There cannot be true mystery except by the side of knowledge. To the savage, nothing is

mysterious, because nothing is known. Only when one has begun to know, does one feel the majesty and awe of the unknown. Science takes man from his self-complacent isolation, and lifts about him the shadow of a mysterious nature. We know what awe there is in seeing a man in the midst of a forest, dwarfed by the giant trees ; or in some vast cathedral, where he seems lost in the presence of such sublimity. This does science do when it places man in the shadow of this great cathedral of nature,—in the shadow of the ancient growths of the primeval world.

Revelation has been the salvation of the world, for it filled with light the hearts of those that were ready for it, and quickened the intuitions of the souls that were hungering for truth. But it forced no one into its fold. Nay, it was itself at the mercy of its believers. If it lifted them up, they dragged it down. Science will demonstrate the fundamental truths of revelation, and will settle the meaning of it.

The religious intuitions of the soul have been the salvation of the world, but they cannot long be its only rest. Faith in them alone forms only a resting-place in the soul's

march. They need outward guides. They need some common force which shall control individual eccentricity, and correct individual inertia or prejudice. A man will not rest long in the simple utterance, "It is true, because I know it is true." He must go on to demonstrate what he knows. And this demonstration science is beginning.

If we are Christians we may, then, well be hopeful and fearless ones. We may reckon all things as ours, may know no enemy but sin, and hail every result of earnest thought, not as complete in itself, but as one of the steps up which the aspiring race shall mount to grander heights.



# THE GAIN OF HISTORY



## THE GAIN OF HISTORY

WHEREIN consists the gain of history? The question implies a larger one, to which its answer alone will furnish a solution: Does mankind advance? Do the changes of history involve corresponding gains? This question suggests the thoughts to which I will call your attention at this time.

The question is vast and vague. It is so vast that I shall be able to touch only two or three leading aspects of it, such as may seem most suited to this occasion. It is vague, because it may appear doubtful where the history of the race begins. Scientific speculation points us back through vistas almost interminable, up through which has pressed the life of which our human life is only the culmination. It would make the history of our life identical with the history of all life upon this globe. I shall not venture upon the tempting fields that are thus thrown open. I shall not ask whether the lowly Ascidian, in whose little sack was contained, as we are told, all the possibilities of

earthly life, was or was not better off than we, his remote descendants. The question, whether the dreamless sleep of this lowly life might be considered as in any way preferable to the fully rounded consciousness of the present, would flow into the larger question, as to whether non-existence is not after all better than existence; for if to sleep is better than to be awake, then not to be is better than to sleep.

Neither will I compare civilization with the barbarism from which, as we are told, it sprang. The gulf that separates the two is now so wide that it cannot be easily spanned, even by the help of the imagination. Barbarism contains so much that is foreign to us, so much that is repulsive to us, that we cannot enter into the heart of it. Our thought of it is apt to swing from a sickly romanticism on the one side, to a superficial literalism on the other; and even could we make the comparison fairly it would involve questions larger and more fundamental than I propose to raise to-day.

As we avoid complications with scientific theories on the one side, so will we avoid theological complications on the other. I will not take you to the garden of Eden,

that we may judge whether the so-called fall of man was really a fall or an elevation. The great mystery of evil we will not attempt to sound.

Avoiding then all matters of theory, we will take history as it actually, or, at least, as it openly, begins. We will take it at the moment, at least, when it begins properly to be called history. Such a moment was that when the Chinese, some three thousand centuries before Christ, under the inspiration of their emperor Fo-hi, awoke to the consciousness of the higher life, and found themselves with the rudiments of a science, a philosophy, a literature, and a religion. Such a moment was that in which the ancient Iranians, under the inspiration of Zoroaster, awoke to the consciousness of the great conflict between good and evil; or that in which the ancient Indian raised the songs, sweet and lofty, many of them, which we find embodied in the early Vedas. The true moment for comparison would be, could we reach it, that which our Aryan ancestors occupied at the time of their dispersion. The nature of their civilization we can guess with some approximation to the truth from inherited customs and from the testi-

mony of language. We can, however, get the fullest revelation from the Vedic literature to which I have just referred, the product of the children who stood the nearest to them, and who received from them the fullest inheritance. These ancient Aryans were, as I have said, our ancestors. We can look back and see them, dimly, in their ancient home, that home which we may call ours also. We can catch some faint vision of their civilization, we can hear the distant echoes of their songs. We find them already surrounded with many of the comforts, many of the luxuries of civilization, and not wholly free, though more free than ourselves, from the vices of civilization. The family was there, with its sanctity and its mutual helpfulness. In them the race had begun its life of thought, of faith, of aspiration, its life of questioning and struggle, its moral and its æsthetic life. They were our fathers. We look back upon them over these four thousand years, if we may use so definite a number where all is so vague and uncertain. The space that separates us includes all that we know as to the history of the family of nations to which we belong. It includes the wanderings of our race, their battlings, their

triumphs. It includes the beauty of Greece, the stateliness of Rome, the philosophy of Germany, the practicality of England, the liberty of America. It includes the hoary traditions of what we call the old, the science of what we call the new. It is worth while, as we look back to where our fathers stood at the very beginning of this mighty process, to ask ourselves whether, or wherein, we are better or better off than they.

In entering upon the discussion before us, it may be well to ask what interest we have in its decision. On which side would the natural faith that all is for the best range itself? We are naturally optimistic, and I think that we are apt to assume that faith in the progress of the race is demanded by any form of optimism. We ask, Can all the experience and struggles of these long ages have been in vain? This faith in the steady advancement of the world is specially strong in the period of youth. So long as the individual is gaining every day in strength and knowledge and mastery of himself and of the world, so long does he feel that humanity is also making constant gains. Perhaps the first feelings that, after all, this may not be so, that the race may be, if not

absolutely degenerating, at least stationary, marks the moment when the first impulse of youth has spent itself, when the man has reached the highest point in his ascent, and pauses before taking the downward path. In many cases, however, this faith maintains itself during the whole life; and this is especially the case in the youth of a nation. The nation's advance is felt to typify the movement of the world. The individual catches the spirit of his people and feels possessed of a perpetual youth. The converse of this may be seen in the fact that when the Roman empire seemed sinking into decay, falling through the rottenness of its own corruption, the belief became widespread that the world itself was hastening to its end. In the midst of the active, triumphant life of to-day, anything that casts a doubt over the faith that universal progress is the manifest destiny of man seems to build a wall about the horizon which stifles us by its closeness. Whatever truth there may be in this faith, perhaps it assumes too much. The faith of optimism may be presented in another form. If the world is the best possible, should it not be at every stage the best possible? Would not our



faith be better satisfied with the belief in a system of compensations, by virtue of which no one age can boast itself over another. I think that we are apt to assume too hastily that the earlier exists for the sake of the later. We are apt to think of childhood and youth as existing for the sake of maturity: might we not as easily look upon maturity as existing for the sake of childhood and youth? Because we like fruit we look upon the flowers of the peach and pear as existing for its sake; but because we like roses and lilies we take it for granted that the seed vessels exist that flowers may be produced. Whatever interests us we take to be the final cause. So we men in our philosophies look upon childhood and youth as merely transitional stages. But why might not a less interested observer look upon children as we do upon the flowers of the woods or the garden? So we look upon the earlier civilization as merely a preparation for the later. Spinoza had a great thought in his mind when he denied the principle of final causes. Every moment and every thing he felt had its end in itself. He could conceive of nothing as existing for the sake of something else.

The thought seemed to him to degrade the world. We may not, perhaps, accept this position in its completeness, but I think we may at least affirm that nothing exists merely for something else; that however much each may contribute to that which comes after, each has sufficient excuse for being in itself. This view applied to history would introduce a great repose into the scenes which are pictured there. We should feel that history did not exist merely for its consummation. You hurry through a novel to find that John and Susan were married at the end. But the interest, the substance of the story, does not consist in this. You read as much in the marriage column of every newspaper. When you have reached that the story is finished. The child in the theatre is hurried on in breathless eagerness to the last act of the tragedy which seems to him to cap the climax to the whole. But this is the moment when the old play-goer is apt to leave. The play for him is already over. The histories of philosophy give us in few words the result of this system and of that; the young student studies it, and fancies that he has got the gist of all. As he grows older he learns

that the value of each system consists less in its result than in its unfolding. It is so in history. We hurry on from point to point to reach the end, but the history is going on all the time. Each moment has its own worth and beauty. Our preachers and moralists are apt to point to the slowness of God's working, to check by the thought our restless impetuosity of pursuit. The moral is a good one, but it is for the most part too superficial. God, we are told, was so many myriad of centuries employed in fitting up the earth for man, and so many more in leading man up to the place he occupies to-day; God's plans move slowly, but they reach their issue without fail. If God's only object had been to create man, or even man of the nineteenth century, I think that the work would have been more quickly done. If the work moved slowly it was because each stage in it was an end in itself. If love brooded over all, each was in its turn beloved. The plan was accomplished at every moment.

I had a friend who in travelling thought that he had learned no city till he had so identified himself with it as to have some feeling as to what it would be to live there.

If we would study history aright, we should so identify ourselves with every epoch as to feel that it was worthy to stand out by itself from among the rest, and have all minister to it. We should then understand better why it was that, as we phrase it, God did not hurry through his work. The assumptions of our conceit might be disturbed, but we should be brought into a healthier relation with the world.

On the other hand, as Ruskin affirms that no picture is complete that has not an opening into the infinite, so it may be that no age is complete without the possibility and the fact of a progression towards something better, and that progress is thus essential to the optimistic view even of the earlier epochs considered in themselves. But even this fact would put the ages upon a certain equality. The same infinitude of possibilities would stretch before the latest as before the earliest; and in the presence of this great fact the later would hardly exult itself overmuch in respect to the earlier.

Among the circumstances that may tend to the exaggeration of the actual rate of progress which society may be making, is found the fact that we start in our estimate

from some comparatively recent period of history. We look back, for instance, to the period of persecution. Looking back upon such points, we feel, truly, that we have actually advanced. I need hardly remark that the sweeping away of abuses that have been produced in the course of history does not imply that history itself is an advance. A man who is rowing up a stream may, through a moment of inadvertence, or through the striking of some fierce rapid, be whirled backward down the stream up which he has advanced with so much difficulty. When he recovers himself, and begins again to ply the oar, he advances, certainly, but would hardly consider himself as making actual progress. We may illustrate the same thing by the triumphs of the medical profession. This is continually accomplishing wonders in the struggle against death, yet death, in every individual case, wins the victory at last, and that too, in almost every case, before the natural term of life has been reached; and in spite of all discovery and all improvement the average length of life has not materially increased. The profession finds enough to do to enable the world to hold its own

against the rapidly increasing strength and hurry of the current. Much of the so-called advance of our civilization is of this nature. It enables us to hold, or to regain, our own. Then, too, I think that we are apt to look upon the past in the most unfavorable light. Thus, for instance, we think of the Roman empire as a period of universal corruption. We forget the statement of Gibbon, that the period between the death of Domitian and the accession of Commodus, a period of about ninety years, was that in which the condition of the human race was the most happy and prosperous.

On the other hand, facts are often insisted upon for the purpose of lowering our pride, which, properly understood, would increase it. Thus we are told how the Chinese anticipated many of the discoveries of which we boast; that they discovered, for instance, and applied the properties of the magnetic needle in the twelfth century before Christ; or that the Egyptians possessed mechanical appliances which surpassed anything with which we are acquainted. A further question, however, arises with respect to the relation of these

discoveries and inventions to the general mass of knowledge, and the use that was made of them. If I wished to exalt our period I would take just such a fact as this early discovery of the magnetic needle by the Chinese. I would show that with them it was a single fact, accidentally hit upon, while with us it has its place in the great organized body of scientific knowledge; and I would ask, What have the Chinese accomplished with the magnetic needle through all these centuries? Europe has by its aid explored the ocean; it has penetrated to the Arctic seas; it has discovered new worlds; what have the Chinese to show for its possession? This comparison makes clear that what with them was an accident, with us is an integral part of our civilization. Or what has Egypt to show for its wonderful machinery? Its most characteristic work would seem to be the pyramids, which are imposing indeed, but which are simply symmetrical piles of stone.

If, after having thus cleared away certain prejudices, on the one side and the other, we now look directly at the field before us, our civilization divides itself into two elements: the one that of life, the other that of

thought. The world that opens before us is so vast and complex as to discourage all attempt at presentation, but we shall seek to distinguish only the most general tendencies. These can perhaps be presented in few words, and if the statement be true, its truth will be obvious with very little proof or illustration. And we shall pass with special rapidity over the first of these elements, dwelling chiefly upon the second, as more in accordance with the character of this occasion.

It is a universally admitted fact that the tendency of our society is towards individualization. This tendency is based upon what may be called the arithmetical view of life; the view, namely, that regards society as made up of units, any one of which is equal to any other. The early society we may perhaps assume to be, under one form or another, patriarchal. It was thus an organization from which each individual derived his worth, in which each had his place, and in which, while true to his position, each had his function and his support. In time of scarcity all indeed suffered together, but the prosperity of the whole involved the prosperity of each. There was



a lack of stimulus, but there was security ; there was a lack of enterprise, but there were the old-fashion virtues of fidelity and loyalty. The so-called patriarchal institution of the South was, in many respects, a mere travesty of the normal condition of this form of life. It was the creature of one age astray amid the life of another. It was like a bird of night bewildered amid the glare of day ; or it was like a raft fitted for the smooth current of the river, but soon dashed to pieces amid the whirl of the ocean. Such was the patriarchal institution, adapted to the repose of earlier forms of society, but amid the intensity, the change, the hurry, the turmoil of the present, it was out of place and was thus fruitful of evil. Thus the painful breaking up and separation of families was a feature of it hardly to be avoided in the circumstances of our present life. It was like the breaking up of the river raft upon the ocean.

The new position of the individual is more manly, more independent than the old, but involves, in a multitude of cases, the life-long, hand-to-hand battle with the wolf at the door, of which the old knew nothing. It leads labor and capital to be regarded as opposed to one another, as having not

merely different but antagonistic interests. The strife between these two interests is beginning to constitute one of the great features of the time. Of course, organization of some sort is the remedy; but thus far organization has taken chiefly the form of trades-unions. These institutions are often of the highest benefit, but in them the principle of individualization has been carried to its extreme. This involves a complete levelling process, and the arithmetical view of society reaches its extreme results. One great object of the trades-unions should be to render possible individual advancement in any trade. The members of it should be able to rise by means of it. But this would break up the arithmetical equality of the units, and the trades-unions seek to render this impossible.

We are in the habit of defining progress as the passage from simple to more complex relations. If this be progress, and if the individual exists for the sake of society, there has certainly been advance; for our society is infinitely more complex than it was once. But if society exists for the sake of the individual, then our doubt returns; for while society has been growing complex, the life

of the individual has been, in many cases, growing bare. The workman in a pistol factory could once make a pistol; now he knows about nothing except a minute part of the pistol. In pin factories many men pass their life in sharpening pins. Their activity is literally reduced to a point. The activity of teachers in our public schools is becoming confined to the passing of scholars over and over, not a single text-book merely, but a few pages of a text-book. Thus individual lives tend to become not mere units, but unorganized units, mere points without extension. Very much the same arithmetical principle is found in a democratic government. It is a mistake to think that a democracy is specially unmanageable in a time of crisis. Its great power is found in its ability to meet crisis. In a crisis men are valued not as mere units, but for what each is worth; and in a democracy the men having most ability are soon pushed forward eagerly to the front. Under this changed aspect of affairs the old virtues shine forth in their old glory. But when the crisis is over, we fall back upon the arithmetical theory of life: one unit is worth as much as another. No longer is the best man sought

for the place of trust. The offices are to be filled by the people, not for them. Hence come the cries of Rotation in office, and To the victors belong the spoils; principles which, carried out, would lead to the destruction of a nationality, as truly as the disintegration of the stone would lead to the downfall of the building of which it was a part. I do not forget the immense advantages of a democracy. Perhaps the greatest of these is that of reaction against abuse. No democracy, worthy of the name, can be long oppressed even by itself. It is thus a protection against the accumulated evils of society. Compared with former tyrannies, even with present monarchies and aristocracies, it is to be preferred. But these evils against which it guards are the products of history, and the removal of them by history does not leave us its debtors. It is as if a river should sweep away in one generation a sand-bank which it had deposited in a former. At best liberty is not progress. It is a condition of progress. Its worth depends upon its use.

I know that the process that we have described leads to great wealth. It develops the resources of a state. But wealth is not

an end in itself: like liberty, it is a means to an end. Its value depends upon its use. So far as it is used for the promotion of knowledge, for the production, or the popularization, of real beauty, or for the ends of philanthropy and religion, so far it may be an object of just pride; but so far as it renders society feeble or corrupt, so far as it is absorbed in extravagant tastelessness, so far as it makes life more difficult instead of easier, so far it is not a blessing, but a curse. The poorest home beautified by taste, which is no mean form of genius, is richer than the costliest one burdened by deformities of upholstery that represent merely money. Labor-saving machines that make work; help that hinders; luxury that burdens; comforts that enervate, are like an over-abundant currency that gives everybody the sense of being rich while the cost of living is so enhanced thereby that all but the very rich are poor.

But it is of its knowledge that the age makes its greatest boast. The achievements of science we feel to be its greatest glory. In this is found the fruit of the weary years through which the generations have toiled up and on to the proud position which we

occupy to-day. But here also the question with which we started presses upon us with as much pertinence and pertinacity as ever.

We find voices, and voices too of authority, not lacking to throw discredit upon the fact of gain. Goethe was fortunate in that the scientific as well as the æsthetic world was thrown open to him. He represented the science of his day as truly as he did its literature. He indeed opened one of the lines of thought which has led to the richest results. His great work, the *Faust*, was doubtless an outgrowth from his own life. The poem begins with a wail of sorrow for the absolute impossibility of knowing anything. *Faust* had studied everything only to find that we can know nothing. The *Faust* has been called the saddest of poems. The consciousness of this hopeless ignorance is one of the chief elements of this sadness, and the poem is all the sadder because it, in this, expresses the feeling which so many share to-day.

Goethe was probably the last man able to represent all science. In these days science is too vast to be condensed into a single focus. A single branch of one science, if it be studied faithfully, is enough to occupy a

lifetime. Goethe was fortunate in standing at the parting of the ways. Perhaps few, if any, at the present day have such varied knowledge as Herbert Spencer. Perhaps thus he, as truly as any other, may be considered a representative man of the age. If he cannot fill this place perfectly, it is because no man can fill it. It is interesting to notice that he takes up the cry of Faust, only more cheerfully. He begins his work by pointing us down into the abyss of the unknowable. Alpine travellers tell us that sometimes a terrible abyss is bridged over by a reach of hard, drifted snow, so solid that one can walk over it, for the most part, in security; so thin that a stroke of the Alpenstock will pierce it, leaving an opening through which may be discerned the blue vacancy beneath. Herbert Spencer drives his staff through the thin stratum of drifted words, of consolidated forms of thought, of congealed tradition which we have felt to be so solid beneath our feet, and bids us look and see the fathomless depths of the unknowable above which we stand. The very words in which we express our science, the very ideas which form its substance, the ideas of space and force and the rest, which to-

gether make up our science, these dissolve themselves into irreconcilable contradictions at our touch, just as a bit of snow, when we grasp it, melts and runs out through our fingers, leaving our hand empty. He tells us indeed that what we call our knowledge bears a certain constant relation to reality, so that practically we have enough to guide us in our lives, and bids us be content with this practical sufficiency. But does this satisfy the great longing for knowledge, for knowledge for its own sake, which has been the inspiration of the race? The practical results of knowledge have been so vast because they have been incidental. The Chinese have cared for no knowledge save that which is practical, and therefore their arts have accomplished so little. Herbert Spencer himself is not satisfied with this. His inspiration is the pursuit of knowledge for the sake of knowing. What practical concern have we with the method of the origin of life upon the world? what with the succession of geologic strata? what with the thin nebulous matter out of which the globe may have been formed? As matters of knowledge these things stir our deepest life, otherwise they concern us not; and it



is questions of this nature that most absorb the interest of Herbert Spencer.

I am not asking whether the result of which I have spoken be or be not true, but whether it be a thing to exult over. When we look back at the noble lives of men who have toiled after knowledge, who have toiled cheerfully, hopefully, through all hardship and pain, and have died fancying with joy that they had done something to increase the sum of human knowledge, and then look upon this as the end, and utter, as the result of all, the words that consumed the heart of Faust, "We find that we can know nothing," I confess that the end seems hardly to crown the work. We might almost envy our Aryan fathers, as they pushed forth from the strand, full of the enthusiasm of discovery, if now the voyage is practically ended, and we must turn our prows in other directions for other gains, loading our ships with merchandise instead of truth.

Let us now leave the extreme results of Herbert Spencer, and glance at those who take the world more in earnest. Perhaps we should first meet Büchner and those who on the whole agree with him. These reduce the universe to matter and force. Here

again I do not dispute the result, I ask merely whether it is gain ; whether even if it be true and worth the knowing, as all truth is, it is a discovery to be boasted over. It is a very singular fact that if this be the result of our modern science, we have reached substantially the position occupied by the Chinese some three thousand years before Christ. The earliest book of the Chinese, so far as it can be comprehended, represents the universe as made up of two elements existing in every object in various proportions. Of these two elements, one was active, the other inert. We may call them, therefore, force and matter. The modern science understands better the laws of force. It can calculate the transference of force ; but its elements are lifeless in its hands. The matter is dead matter, the force is aimless force. We have merely superficial and mechanical relations. With the early Chinese the elements were living, were divine ; at once the substance and the rulers of the world. And when I look at the living world about me, I confess that of the two these seem nearer right. At least, I do not feel inclined to exult greatly at our gain.

The views that I have considered are extreme. They mark rather tendencies than accepted results of our science. The truest science has less of theory. It concentrates itself upon the business right before it. This business is, under one form or another, analysis. Nothing is more inspiring than its triumphs in this work, but at the last it gives us, as it is its business to do, elements in the place of the wholes which we put into its hands. Now let us have the elements by all means, but not at the expense of the wholes. Of the two, these are vastly more important. The sense of the glory of the heavens is worth more than the knowledge of all that the physicist can tell us about them. The sense of the beauty of the flower, the sense of the life that embodies itself in its sweet and delicate form, is worth more than all that science can tell us about it; just as the genius of Shakespeare, the thought of Plato, and the soul of Jesus, are worth more than all the chemist or the physiologist could tell us about them. The burial urn contains the ashes of the dead, but that which made their life no urn can hold. And everything that lives, nay, everything that is, this measureless universe itself,

has its reality in its wholeness, not in its parts.

Our Aryan fathers, if we may judge, as before, from those of their children who were most closely united with them, stood with glad awe in the presence of a living universe. When the poet sings to-day, —

“The sun himself shines heartily,  
And shares the joy he brings,”

the words hardly have a meaning. The mechanical view of the world is so habitual with us that we cannot share the fine insight which the words express. To our fathers they would have expressed a simple truth. The fire on the hearth, the breeze that swept across the earth, the lightning that flashed in the heavens, the dawn that ushered in the day, the deep expanse of the heaven above us, the blue depths into which our gaze may press only to lose itself in the illimitable reaches of light, — all of these were living, helpful, and glad. All shared the joy they brought.

They were not only living, they were divine. I remember one night in mid-ocean when the sea was specially luminous. Wherever the surface of the water was

broken the strange soft light gleamed forth. The wake of the vessel, the track of the black-fish, the crests of the waves far as the eye could reach, seemed touched with flame. It seemed as if we were sailing on a sea of light just hidden by a thin veil of waters, and wherever the veil was broken through the light shone forth. Something like this seems to have been the view which our fathers took of the universe. It was divine, and wherever the uniformity of its surface was broken through the divinity shone forth.

I grant that this was an extreme view, in its details hardly defensible to-day. All that I would urge is that perhaps our bare, mechanical theories are equally extreme.

But, it may be urged, if our physical theories are too materialistic, our religion is spiritual enough to counterbalance them: in this at least there has been only gain. But here we must notice that a godless world implies a worldless God. There may be a spot where pure spirit has its home; but here, upon this earth, the body without the spirit we call dead, and the spirit without the body we call a ghost. Just so far as our view of the world is materialistic is our religion ghostly. To speak more techni-

cally, we cannot place the infinite and the finite over against one another. If we attempt this, instead of the infinite and the finite we have two finites only.

Perhaps I may seem to have erred in speaking thus on an occasion like the present, to have shown too little sympathy with the results that, in many aspects of them, are the glory of our present age. If I fully accepted the negative results which we may seem to have reached, I think I should have taken an hour less genial to urge them. But I am a believer in the present and in the future; I believe in the great law of progress in the world of life. I believe, however, that the analysis which I have just offered is in the main correct. The elements which we have examined are the peculiar elements of the life of the present. If then the world is really gaining, the conditions of the gain are to be found in just these elements. That it is gaining can be proved only so far as it can be shown that these elements furnish the conditions of advance.

Approaching the subject from this point of view, we find that in the comparison of the present with the past we have placed

the present at some disadvantage by comparing fragments of this with the whole of that. The religion of our fathers, their science and their philosophy, their materialism and their idealism, were all one. With us the elements of thought as well as of life have become differentiated. Each receives separate treatment, and thus when compared with the undifferentiated whole, each lacks something that is found in that. But each has thus become developed into a fulness of detail that was before impossible; and therefore just so far as they can be recombined into a unity similar to the old, do we have a fulness and a grandeur of conception far surpassing that.

I think that we may assume as the first and most pressing need of the spirit is to feel itself at home in the world, to feel itself at one with it. The Brahmins in their forest meditations uttered this thought in a form clearer than has often been given to it. Fear, they urged, comes from a sense of difference between the soul and its surroundings. At the slightest hint of such a difference fear enters. They thought to remove this sense of disquietude by affirming the absolute oneness of the soul of man with

the soul of the universe. This, however, was a mere abstract assertion, so abstract that it repelled all detail by making the consummation of this union accomplished in unconsciousness; but none the less it is an abstraction that contains a mighty truth, and the need which it was designed to meet is one that has been the stimulus of thought and life ever since.

The great object of thought and of life is to produce this sense of the oneness of the spirit with its surroundings. The spirit studies that it may find itself in the outer world; it acts that it may impress itself upon the outward world. This statement may be denied, and especially the first portion of it. We study, it may be urged, to learn facts. But men do not study to learn facts, they study to learn the truth which the facts represent. Facts are interesting as they lead to truth. We study facts that we may put them into a form in which we may think them, and thus get at the truth that underlies them; and the more thoroughly facts can be thought, that is, the more thoroughly the spirit can find itself in them, the more thoroughly does it feel itself at home with them.



The great difficulty that most who are not absorbed by the joy of actual exploration find with the physical theories, or habits of looking upon the world, so prevalent at the present day, is that in them the spirit feels itself surrounded by foreign elements. The mind does not fully recognize itself in them. Already a solution of this difficulty is sought by an elevation of our notion of matter, by bringing matter into harmony with the spirit. Thus Tyndall urges that matter should be exalted in our thought till it is looked upon as the other side of the great mystery, and equally worthy and wonderful. A solution has been sought by others by making thought a property of matter, developed by it under certain circumstances; which view, however, must not be confounded with that of the Stoics, who made intelligence an essential property of matter. These attempts come from the physical side. From the metaphysical comes the attempt to reduce atoms of matter to points of force; and, as we are directly conscious of force through will, these points of force assume a higher significance, and the material is sublimated into the spiritual.

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All these attempts fail of their end, because the fundamental antithesis is not between mind and matter, but between the unities, the wholes amid which alone the spirit feels at home, and the atoms or points with which science has to do. To the physical view the world is broken up, is ground down, into infinitesimal atoms of points, connected merely externally, and the wholeness is found in the conjunction and the correlated movement of these. Here is the great antithesis. The mind cannot think the world of science, taken merely as such; and science cannot formulate the world of mind.

The real medium between the internal and the external, between mind and matter, is found in the world of ideas. The mind is at home among ideas, and among these only, and so far as it finds the ideal element embodied in matter, so far does it feel itself at home with that. Who feels a statue to be a material presence? Who is oppressed by the mass of physical details in a cathedral? While matter divides and subdivides itself till it is finally lost in the endlessness of the process, the ideal is one and absorbs the diversity of the material into itself.

This ideal element also manifests itself in the natural world. Our joy in beauty springs from the fact that in it we find ourselves face to face with this ideal element. This is the life of the individual, it is the moving power of history. This is the unity of the universe. In the thought of God, said Spinoza, the universe exists as a single idea. So far as this ideal element is perceived in the outward world, so far does the spirit feel at home with it.

This thought brings us face to face with a word the most misused of any in the English language, misused, first, by extravagant use, and afterwards by extravagant abuse: I mean the word "teleology." Its true use is not to be found in that view which would make anything exist merely for the sake of something else, but in that which would make each exist for its own sake, and also for the sake of something else, and indeed for the sake of all the rest; just as the carved stone of a triumphal arch exists for the sake of its own beauty, and also for the completion of those next it, and for the strength and beauty of the whole. Neither is it necessarily found in that view which sees a special act of final causation in every

nice adaptation ; still less in that view which makes everything designed for human use, the grapevine, as one has said, to produce wine, and the cork-tree to produce corks for the bottling of it. The true teleology is found rather in the great fact of mutual adaptability and in the grand and onward movement of the whole.

I know that in making reference to any form of final causation, I may seem to be setting myself back into the dark ages. I will not attempt to justify myself by abstract considerations. I will not even quote the authority of Huxley, who, in his essay upon Descartes, shows the limitations of purely scientific thought. I will not enumerate the leading men of science who have recognized teleology under one form or another. I will simply shelter myself behind the name of one who, more perhaps than any other, has attempted to sweep our minds clean of every teleological conception. I refer to Herbert Spencer. He says of the various religious beliefs, that they are parts of the constituted order of things. Especially does he claim the direct authority of the unknowable for what would appear to be the Spencerian philosophy as representing the progressive

tendency of the times. He tells his disciple, who might hesitate to utter his highest thought lest he should disturb the faith of others, that it is not for nothing that he has in him the sympathies with some principles and repugnance to others; that he, like every other man, may properly consider himself as one of the myriad agencies through which works the Unknown Cause; and adds; "Not as adventitious, therefore, will the wise man regard the faith that is in him." "Not for nothing," — what do these words imply on the lips of one who has refused to recognize final causation either under the form of a plan or a tendency; who has refused to recognize even the tendency in the living body to assume a certain form? They imply, perhaps, that when he thinks formally, he can keep himself within the artificial limits he has fixed, but that when he thinks really, his whole intellect comes into play. "Not for nothing," I welcome the words, but I think we can hardly confine them to a single class of cases. If, for instance, the Spencerian philosophy was to be inspired by the Unknown Cause, all the circumstances that, working through all these ages, have at last

made the Spencerian philosophy possible, would not have been left to the action of external causes. "Not for nothing" is the great questioning which marks our time. "Not for nothing" also are all the faiths and aspirations of the nature. "Not for nothing" is all that combination of facts and relationship, the myriad delicacies of organization which furnish the background for these faiths and aspirations. Science has educated even our unscientific minds too far to let us admit a *Deus ex machina*, however great the occasion; and if Spencer exclaims "not for nothing" is this mighty impulse of thought that marks the age, we can only answer, "not for nothing" is anything.

I do not refer to the name of Spencer to settle anything by his authority, but simply to show that one may speak of teleology and yet have a foothold in this nineteenth century. As soon as we admit this, as soon as we recognize the ideal element which is the life of all things, so soon do we recognize the possibility of reconciliation between ancient and modern thought. The ideal element, taking up into itself all the results of our analyses, assumes a grandeur and a glory that had never been possible to it

before. Of old, men recognized the ideal element only when it forced itself upon their notice; now we can see it everywhere. The savage or the child can enjoy the beauty of the flower. To the scientist, who is merely a scientist, who tears the plant to pieces and sees only that which remains, sees only that which is technical and mechanical, the flower is no more beautiful than the root. To the man of science, however, in whose heart the child still lives, who still has the sense of the unity, the beauty and the mystery of life, the root becomes hardly less beautiful than the flower. To the man who unites this twofold life, the ideal element does not manifest itself here and there only, but everywhere. The universe becomes, not here and there, but at every point, transparent and transfigured. The atoms or the points show themselves in their discreteness only to be lost again in the unity of the whole, which has become richer and fuller by the change. Thus the new does not supplant the old, but completes it. And herein we see the reality of the world's advance. By the combination and utilization of our results, a fulness of life was possible that was never possible before.

How this principle applies to the differentiation in our modern society we cannot here discuss. I would merely say that the education of all may make each share something of the fulness of our modern life, however narrow his individual lot may be; and further, that this differentiation of society calls for and makes possible the ideal element in statesmanship, just as the analyses of modern science give fresh space and power to the ideal element of thought.

I have spoken with more or less abstractness: concrete examples may make my thought more clear. For these we have not far to seek. Two of our number, who have recently left us, force themselves, in this connection, upon our thought. One of them showed himself the child of this large century by the very circumstances of his life. The child of both hemispheres, his mind was enriched by what each could furnish. He was, not merely by profession, but by all the strength and enthusiasm of his nature, a student and a teacher of science. Not only did he make the science of the age his own. The wealth of the age showed itself worthy of our pride by offering itself to his use, and opening new realms to his



unwearied search. He was a man of detail; no fact was too minute or trifling for his observation. But in the midst of all this ponderous accumulation of knowledge the heart of the child, the heart of love, of wonder, the ever fresh sense of the beauty of the beautiful, still lived in him. The idealizing faculty accepted all this detail and used it for its ends. It was said that he shrank overmuch from theory. I do not know how this may have been, but what we all know is that he saw everywhere, in all the diversities of the universe, the presence of a plan. Just as a musical theme unites all manifoldness of variation into one grand all-pervading movement, the divine plan met him everywhere and glorified the whole. Thus to the child's sense of beauty, and the child's joy in it, was added the trained insight that saw that the whole was beautiful.

As Agassiz carried the ideal element into science, Sumner carried it into statesmanship. As the one was cosmopolitan in space, owned by two continents, the other was cosmopolitan in time. The history of the past was familiar and real to him as the life of the present. He did not go to the past as a student merely. In him it lived afresh.

His lips caught eloquence from the orators of old, and the experience of the past threw light upon the present. Upon the confused and warring elements of our life he brought to bear the power of an idea. To this he consecrated himself. It has been said that his nature was marked by an over self-assertion; if this be so it is fortunate that his lesser self was so absorbed into that idea which was his larger self, that his self-assertion became the assertion of this idea. The hardest and harshest elements of the life about him became the servants of this idea. He forgave the hand that was raised against himself, then, which was much harder, the hands that were raised against his country. And when he died the memory of his consecration and of his forgiveness united to give fresh power to the idea which had been his being.

I have said that the real gain of history is found in the fact that in this age life may be larger and fuller than in an earlier age. In illustration I point to Agassiz and Sumner. You may have differed with them in many things, you may have criticised some of their methods and results; but I ask, confident of the answer, In what other age would these lives, so large, so full, have been possible?

I am in this comparison referring not to the personalities of these men, but to their opportunities. There have been students as earnest and childlike; but when has the world been thrown open to the gaze of the spirit as it is to-day? There have been statesmen as pure and strong; but when, save in these later generations, do we find examples of a successful statesmanship, which has taken note of man as man, which has united the lowest and the highest in one view?

I do not refer to these men as representing the ideal element in its most perfect form; but in part as symbols of the true use, the use which will one day be actually made, of the material which the age is accumulating. At present it is overburdened by details. It is the novelty and abundance of these details that give to it the aspect of materialism. At each newly discovered fact in regard to the relation of mind and matter comes the cry of materialism. But no fact can be more materialistic than the fact that we have bodies. No theory of the origin of the human race can be more materialistic than the fact of the birth of the individual. So soon as the new

facts are familiar as the old they will become spiritualized like the old. For spiritual facts, though for a moment lost sight of, are as permanent as any others, and more real than all others, and in the long run incorporate all others into themselves, and are the larger and fresher through every gain. So that while our Aryan fathers saw more or less grotesque, more or less sublime forms of divinity, looking out from the earth and the heavens, and saw more truly than those who see no divinity at all, when the want of the present is completed, every detail of science shall add to the glory of the ideal, and the spiritual shall be seen to be first and all pervading as well as last.

Meanwhile, though another age shall lead our work to its full completeness, we have the joy of the seeking and the finding, and may be content.



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